This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

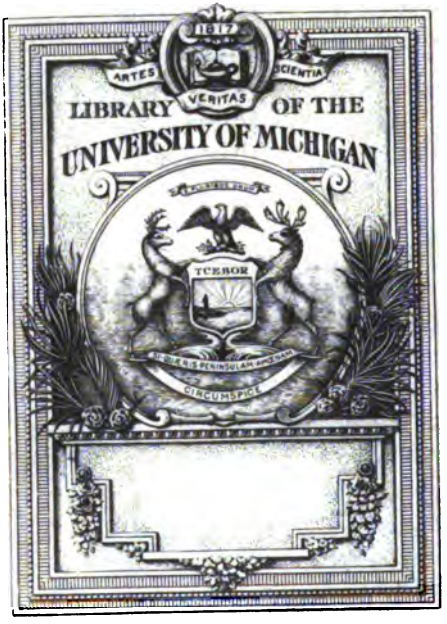
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



THE GIFT OF
Tappan Presbyterian
Association

BS
511
.P95

NOTES

ON ALL THE

BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE,

FOR THE USE OF THE

PULPIT AND PRIVATE FAMILIES,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S. &c.

SI juxta apostolum Paulum Christus Dei virtus est; Deique sapientia, et qui nescit scripturas nescit Dei virtutem ejusque sapientiam, ignoratio scripturarum ignoratio Christi est.

—JEROME IN ESAIAM.

NORTHUMBERLAND:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
BY ANDREW KENNEDY, *Franklin's Head*, QUEEN-STREET.

1804.

[7444]

gift
Tappan Presb. Assn
1-9-1933

The INTRODUCTION.

WE are now entering on the conſideration of the moſt important and intereſting of all hiſtories, that of Jeſus Chriſt, from whom, we who believe his divine miſſion, and profeſs ourſelves to be his followers, are denominated *chriſtians*. We cannot, therefore, give too much attention to the incidents of his life, and all his diſcourſes; eſpecially as he declared that the words which he ſpake were not his own, and that the Father, who was in him, performed the miraculous works by which his divine miſſion was atteſted.

Jeſus was a Jew, and the Jewiſh or Hebrew nation was a people eminently diſtinguiſhed by Almighty God, as the medium of almoſt all his communications to mankind; all the prophets, except Balaam, having been of that nation. And the hiſtory of Jeſus is the more extraordinary, as the Jews had been without any prophet, or any perſon pretending to prophecy, about four hundred years before the appearance of John the Baptiſt, who announced the coming of Jeſus as a prophet greatly ſuperior to himſelf; his own miſſion being only introductory to that of Jeſus.

At the time of the public appearance of Jeſus, the Jews were in a ſtate of ſubjection to the Romans, not having the power of life and death, and being governed by Roman officers, reſiding at Cæſarea, but who attended at Jeruſalem at the three great feſtivals; at which time there was always a great concourſe of people in that city.

With reſpect to the religious ſtate of the country, the Jews were divided into two great ſects, the Phariſees, and the Saducees; of whom the former, which conſiſted of the bulk of the people, and eſpecially the more religious of them, were firm believers in a reſurrection; whereas the latter, who were in general the richeſt, and alſo the more profligate, diſbelieved that great article of faith. The Phariſees alſo held many traditions which had been added to the laws of Moſes, and were the foundation of much ſuperſtition; and an attention to ſupernumerary duties derived from this ſource, took off from their attention to the moral precepts of the law.

But the moſt remarkable circumſtance in the ſtate of the Jewiſh nation at the time of Chriſt's appearance, was their expectation of the Meſſiah, a perſon announced by the prophet Daniel under the character of the *Son of Man*, who was to come in the clouds of heaven, and to whom God would give a kingdom that ſhould have no end.

It was alſo generally underſtood to be foretold that the Meſſiah ſhould be *cut off*, and that his appearance was to be ſeventy weeks (or as the Jews themſelves interpret it) four hundred and ninety years, after an order

der (which muſt have been given by ſome of the kings of Perſia) to reſtore and rebuild Jeruſalem. The Jews muſt therefore have been ſenſible this time was expired about the time of Jeſus; and in fact, overlooking what was ſaid about his being to be *cut off*, which they might think to have ſome figurative meaning, the whole nation of the Jews, though in a more flouriſhing and happy ſtate under the Romans than under any of their own princes ſince the Babyloniſh captivity, bore with great impatience their ſubjection to foreigners, and eagerly expected the appearance of their Meſſiah, who they thought would reſcue them from their ſubjection; and many of them from the prohibition in the laws of Moſes (Deut. xvii, 15) to make themſelves a king of any but one of their own nation, conſidered ſubjection to foreigners to be unlawful; and ſome time before Chriſt's appearance in a public character there had been a rebellion in the country, headed by Judas, ſurnamed Gaulonites, on this very account, and much blood had been ſhed in the ſuppreſſion of it.

The life of Jeſus was written by four perſons generally called *Evangelists*, of whom two, Matthew and John, were apoſtles, and the other two, Mark and Luke, early diſciples. Mark was the ſon of Barnabas's ſiſter the companion of Paul and Barnabas in their firſt journey to preach the goſpel, but afterwards he is ſuppoſed to have attached himſelf more particularly to the apoſtle Peter; and he was certainly well informed concerning the hiſtory which he undertook to write. Luke was a phyſician of Antioch, the companion of

Paul in his later travels, and probably alſo well acquainted with the other apoſtles. In the introduction to his goſpel he mentions his ability to collect and arrange the moſt authentic accounts that he could collect for his undertaking.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are ſaid to have written their goſpels about the year A. D. 64, when written accounts of the life of Chriſt would be particularly wanted as the great actors in the ſcene were then going off the ſtage, and the principal church at Jeruſalem was about to be broken up, and the members of it diſperſed, by the approaching Jewiſh war.

John wrote after the reſt, and is ſaid to have intended his goſpel to be a ſupplement to the others, which being compoſed when he was old, and being probably written in detached parts, was perhaps put together by other perſons. The greateſt part of his goſpel conſiſts of diſcourſes and incidents not recorded by any of the other evangeliſts, but other parts are very circumſtantial details of events related by them; being perhaps taken from his mouth before he had ſeen the other goſpels; and in ſome caſes in which his account differs from that of the other evangeliſts, he ſeems to have intended to be more exact than they were.

The ſtyle of John is very peculiar, and highly figurative, and he repreſents our Saviour as uſing a language of which we ſhould have had no idea from the writings of the other evangeliſts. On this account his Goſpel, and his other writings, are difficult to be underſtood.

Tho'

Tho' we have only four original writers of the life of Jeſus, the evidence of the hiſtory does not reſt on the teſtimony of four men. Chriſtianity had been propagated in a great part of the world before any of them had written, on the teſtimony of thouſands, and tens of thouſands, who had been witneſſes of the great facts which they have recorded; ſo that the writing of theſe particular books are not to be conſidered as the *cauſe* but rather the *effect* of the belief of chriſtianity; nor could thoſe books have been written and received as they were, viz. as authentic hiſtories, of the ſubject of which all perſons of that age were judges, if the facts they have recorded had not been well known to be true.

Two of the goſpels, viz. thoſe of Luke and John, have *introductions*, or *obſervations previous* to their entering on the hiſtory, that of Luke being deſigned to ſhew his competency to the undertaking, and that of John indirectly animadverting on ſome opinions concerning the perſon of Chriſt, which were very prevalent at the time of his writing, and which ſeem to have been the occaſion of all that he wrote. I ſhall begin with that of Luke.

NOTES

ON THE

HARMONY

OF THE

FOUR EVANGELISTS.

SECTION I.

The Introduction to the Gospel of Luke and John.

LUKE I, 1——4. JOHN I. 1——18.

LUKE I. &c. From this it appears that there were many imperfect accounts of the life of Jesus in a very early period; nor can we wonder at this, when we consider how very important the events of it were, and that it was an age in which the art of writing was very common. Numbers, no doubt would take down what they had heard the apostles and other eye-witnesses related concerning the discourses and the miracles

racles of Jeſus; and ſome, willing to have their accounts correct, would naturally ſubject them to the inſpection of thoſe from whom they had received them, and of others who were equally acquainted with the facts; and the written relations of facts and diſcourſes ſo authenticated could not fail to gain the greateſt credit; and might even be adopted by thoſe who compiled the larger and more complete accounts that we call the *gospels*. As Luke paſſes no cenſure on theſe hiſtories, except that they were *imperfect*, they were probably ſuch accounts as theſe, collected by well meaning perſons, and put together perhaps without a due regard to method. Indeed the ſpurious goſpels were not written ſo early, but in imitation of *the four* which are generally received.

It is on this principle (which appears to me a very natural one) that I account for the great ſimilarity between ſome accounts of the ſame tranſactions in the different goſpels, and eſpecially the placing together things which had no natural connection. For I cannot think that any of the evangeliſts had ſeen what had been written by any of the other except John. Their differences with reſpect to order, and ſmall circumſtances, is too great to allow us to ſuppoſe that they copied, or abridged, one another. They were all ſufficiently well qualified to write without that aſſiſtance; and none of them being very forward to write, they would probably have thought their labour ſuperſeded if they had ſeen any other goſpel.

4. It is obvious to remark that the evangeliſt does not claim any inſpiration, but that he merely profeſſes to

to write from materials collected with care from thoſe whom he thought to be beſt informed of the tranſactions he was about to relate.

His work is addreſſed to Theophilus, of whom we know nothing more than his name; but he was probably a perſon of eminence in the chriſtian church, who had expreſſed a deſire of having a full account of the hiſtory of Jeſus from Luke, whom he knew to be well qualified to give it.

John I. 1. I have obſerved that the phraſeology of John is peculiar to himſelf, and it is no where more ſo than in this introduction to his goſpel. In order to underſtand it, and ſee the propriety of it, we muſt attend to the ſtate of things at the time in which he wrote, and this we may eaſily collect from his epiſtles. The profeſſed object of them was *to oppoſe the doctrine of the* Gnoſtics, which was very prevalent before this apoſtle died, or to prove that *Jeſus* and the *Chriſt* was the ſame perſon, and that Jeſus had real fleſh and blood, like other men, and was not merely man in appearance. The ormer of theſe all the Gnoſtics denied, and the latter, ſome of them. For they held that the Chriſt was a ſuper-angelic being, who entered into Jeſus at his baptiſm, and many of them ſaid that Jeſus had only the outward appearance of a man, and that he was incapable of feeling pain, or of dying, which they thought to be unworthy of his dignity. For the firſt corruptions of the chriſtian doctrine were introduced on the idea of magnifying the perſon of Chriſt, many perſons objecting to chriſtianity on account of the meanneſs of its founder.

That

That John wrote his goſpel, as well as his epiſtles, with a view to counteract theſe doctrines, is evident from his declaration at the cloſe of it. Ch. xx, 21. *These are written that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.* This is the very language of his epiſtles, in which it unqueſtionably was his object to oppoſe the Gnoſtic doctrines. To me it is evident that the peculiar phraſeology of this introduction was owing to his alluding to the terms made uſe of in the Gnoſtic ſyſtem, and his ſhewing in what ſenſe they may be adopted by Chriſtians.

The Gnoſtics, agreeably to the philoſophy of the times, ſuppoſed that all ſpirits were emanations from the ſupreme mind, or ſomething emitted from his ſubſtance, like light from the ſun. For the idea of *creation out of nothing* was univerſally diſclaimed by thoſe who were called philoſophers. They alſo ſaid that the ſupreme mind dwelt in what they called the πληρωμα which is literally rendered *fullness*, without the bounds of which reſided the divine emanations, to which ſome of them gave the name of *Æons*. Of theſe Æons they enumerated a great number, deſcribing their mutual relation, and the production of ſome of them from others in a regular ſucceſſion, or generation, like the genealogies of men. They were alſo particularly diſtinguiſhed by a number of different names, ſome of which were *life*, *light*, *grace*, *truth*, *only begotten*, and *logos*, which we tranſlate, *the word*; all of which the evangeliſt ſhews might be mediately or immediately applied to Chriſt.

This

This part of their doctrine was peculiarly fanciful, and the apoſtle Paul frequently ſpeaks of them with indignation and contempt, as *endleſs genealogies* and *old wives fables*. 1 Tim i, 4. Tit. iii, 9.

Conſidering the object of John in writing his goſpel, as well as his epiſtles, there is a peculiar propriety in his Introduction, though it has been groſsly miſunderſtood, and has occaſioned more miſapprehenſion of the principles of the goſpel than any other part of the New Teſtament.

John might think it more neceſſary to give his ideas of the proper uſe of the term *Logos*, in conſequence of the philoſophizing Jews, like Philo, making uſe of it as ſynonymous to the νους of Plato, thereby accommodating the language of their ſcriptures to the Platonic philoſophy. Philo wrote long before the apoſtle John, and therefore it is poſſible that he might have ſeen, or heard of his writings.

The Gnoſtics did not ſay that their *Logos* was the *Christ*, and therefore John had no occaſion to ſay expreſsly that he was not; but as both Philo and the Gnoſtics maintained that the Logos was inferior to the Supreme Being, it might naturally give him occaſion to ſay that when that term was uſed properly, it ſignified nothing more than that *word*, or *power*, of God by which all things were made, and therefore was no diſtinct or inferior principle, but God himſelf.

The proper meaning of the phraſe *with God* προς τον θεον, ſeems to be *was God's*, or what belonged to him. Thus what we render Ps. L, 11, the wild beaſts of the field are *mine*, is in Hebrew עמדי, and

in

in the LXX is rendered μετ εμου, which is equivalent to προ με. But I do not lay much ſtreſs on this interpretation.

3. This is thought by many to be proof of the divinity of Chriſt; whereas the evangeliſt ſays nothing even indirectly about Chriſt till the 11th verſe of this chapter, nor expreſsly till the 17th, but ſpeaks of that *power of God* which reſided in Chriſt, ſo that in a figurative ſenſe he was ſaid to be *made flesh*. What is that *word* by which all things were made, we learn from the Old Teſtament, when we read that *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.* Ps. xxxiii, 9. In this the pſalmiſt evidently alludes to Moſes ſaying, *God said let there be light, and there was light*, &c. The apoſtle, who was well acquainted with the ſcriptures, could not mean to contradict them, as he muſt have done, had he intimated that any other than the Supreme Being himſelf made all things. He certainly alluded to the well known language of the ſcriptures.

The greateſt miſrepreſentation of this paſſage had its origin with the chriſtian fathers of the third century, who being willing to eſtabliſh the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt, and well knowing that it was not received in the time of the apoſtles, ſaid that in their time the minds of men, and eſpecially thoſe of the Jews, were not prepared to receive it, and for that reaſon inſiſted on nothing but the humanity of Chriſt, and his divine miſſion; but that when the other apoſtles were dead,

dead, John was inſtructed in the higher and more ſublime doctrines of his *Pre-existence and Divinity*. But John meant nothing more than to aſſert the divinity of that *power* by which Chriſt acted. Beſides, is it credible that if the doctrines of the divinity and pre-exiſtence of Chriſt had been true, the apoſtles would not have taught them from the firſt, and laid proportionable ſtreſs upon them? But they never could have had any ſuſpicion of ſuch doctrines being advanced by any chriſtians, ſo contrary were they to their ideas of the perſon and office of Chriſt.

When the *word* or the *logos*, in this Introduction, is conſidered as being not a *person*, but a *property*, or *power*, viz. that of God, it will be neceſſary to refer to it by the pronoun *it*, and not by *him*, as in our tranſlation, which was made on the idea of the *word* being *Christ*; and to perſons accuſtomed to the Engliſh verſion, this will appear aukward. But this only ariſes from the genius of our language. In the original there is no diſtinction of that kind. At the eleventh verſe, where the perſonification is peculiarly ſtrong, it will be proper to ſubſtitute the word *God*, whoſe power it was, for the power itſelf.

V. 9. May be rendered, *That was the true light, which coming into the world enlighteneth every man.*] In this view the expreſſion ſeems borrowed from our Lord's own words, Ch. xii, 46. *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.* Compare alſo the fourth verſe of this chapter, with Ch. viii. 12. T.

12. In the Jewiſh phraſeology *believing on a perſon's name* only means *believing in* the perſon, or thing, whoſe name it was, and therefore, if the *logos* had not been conſidered as perſonified, *believing in it*, would have been the proper rendering of the phraſe.

13. This phraſeology is ſimilar to that of our Lord to Nicodemus Ch. iii, 5. *Except a man be born of water and of the ſpirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God: That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the ſpirit is ſpirit.* The ſpirit means the ſpirit of God, or that power by which the miracles of Chriſt were wrought, and ſomething that is called *baptism by the Holy Spirit* was foretold by John to be uſed by his ſucceſſor.

The figurative language of being *born of God*, or *born of the Spirit*, ſeems intended to denote that change which the goſpel would make in men, ſo great as to be called a new birth. As the former natural birth is ſaid to be *of man*, or in the courſe of common generation, the latter is ſaid to be *of God*. By the former we become the ſons of man, by the latter ſons of God. By the former we are born to a ſhort uncertain life, by the latter to an immortal and happy one; and as baptiſm, or waſhing, was uſed at the natural birth, another baptiſm was uſed at this ſecond, or new birth; and beſides being baptized with water, the chriſtians in the age in which chriſtianity was propagated, received the gift of the holy ſpirit, and this was called a *baptism with the ſpirit*.

The ſame idea is expreſſed by the term *creation*, as by *birth*. We are ſaid to be *created anew* by the goſpel;

pel, and as Chriſt is at the head of the chriſtian diſpenſation, this ſecond or new creation is aſcribed to Chriſt, as the *firſt* is aſcribed to God. This language which is beautifully figurative, but very intelligible, has contributed to the ſtrange opinion of the original creation of the heavens and the earth being the work of Chriſt than which no opinion is leſs probable, or ſcriptural. Since it has been ſeen that, according to Moſes, and the pſalmiſt after him, the ſpeaking of a word (to expreſs the facility with which the great work was performed) was ſufficient for the production of all things, what occaſion could there be to employ any ſecondary or intermediate agent?

14. *Only begotten.*] This phraſe is often uſed to ſignify *beſt beloved*, characterizing the child which is the object of that particular affection which is generally beſtowed on an only ſon.

16. This verſe, with what follows to the end of v. 18, ſeems to be naturally connected with the 14th verſe. Thus: The Word was fleſh, and tabernacled among us—full of grace and truth. And of his fulneſs we all have received, even grace for, or *inſtead of*, grace. For the law (which was an important grace to the Jews) was given by Moſes, *but* the *ſuperior* grace, and the truth, were by Jeſus Chriſt. *Particularly:* No man hath ever ſeen God; *but* the only begotten Son who is *now received* into the boſom of the Father, he hath declared all that we needed to know concerning him. T.

V. 15. Seems almoſt naturally to connect with the 19th verſe. Probably this was its original and true

place, out of which it hath been removed by the miſtake of ſome very early copyiſts. See more Theological Repoſitory, Vol. I. p. 45, &c. T. Theſe tranſpoſitions are obſerved in the paraphraſe.

18. *In the bosom of the Father.*] i. e. in the ſecret councils of God.

I ſhall endeavour to expreſs the real ſenſe of the evangeliſt in this introduction, in the following

PARAPHRASE.

John i. 1. From all eternity, exiſted the *Logos*; of which you now hear ſo much, by which we are to underſtand, not what the Gnoſtics do, *a being distinct from God*, but an attribute of God; viz. his wiſdom and power, and conſequently, in fact, God himſelf. (2.) This attribute always belonged to God. (3) and by it were all things created; every thing that exiſts being the production of divine power and ſkill. (4.) *Life*, of which the Gnoſtics ſpeak, is only that which proceeds from this divine attribute or energy, and eſpecially that light of inſtruction which God from time to time imparts to mankind (5) tho' it has often been greatly miſapprehended, and abuſed by them.

6, 7, 8, 9. This light ſhone to us moſt diſtinctly through Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe divine miſſion was witneſſed by John the Baptiſt, who was not himſelf, as ſome now pretend, the true or principal light (by profeſſing which they avoid that perſecution which falls upon us who acknowledge ourſelves to be chriſtians) but was ſent to announce it to the world.

10. This divine light, or power, which reſided in an extraordinary manner in Chriſt, was the very ſame by

by which the world itſelf was made, but was not known or received in the world as ſuch. (11.) Tho', therefore, the world into which this divine power came, was God's, he was rejected by it, and even by that nation which was in a particular ſenſe, his own. (12.) This cenſure, however, does not affect all. Some have received him, and by that means have become the ſons of God, and thereby heirs of a reſurrection to eternal life; (13) to which privilege they are not intitled as the natural deſcendants of Abraham, or in conſequence of having been incorporated with the Jewiſh nation, but they receive it by the good pleaſure and grace of God.

14. This divine light was ſo eminently diſplayed in Chriſt, that it may be ſaid that the Logos, or the divine wiſdom and power, *appeared in a human form*, and dwelt among us; ſo that from being inviſible, as it neceſſarily is in the Divine Being himſelf, whoſe attribute it is, it became the object of our ſenſes; and from what we ourſelves ſaw, eſpecially on the mount of transfiguration, where his glory was more fully diſplayed, we were convinced that the glory could not be leſs than that of the *only begotten*, and beſt beloved *Son of God* (which the Gnoſtics diſtinguiſh into another divine emanation) full of grace and truth. 16. Of this fulneſs of grace and truth, which was in him, we have received, viz. the grace of the goſpel, after that of the law of Moſes. 17. For this fuller diſplay of the divine grace, and this more abundant communication of divine truth, was reſerved to the diſpenſation of the goſpel. 18. He it is who has come to ſhew us the Father, who

himſelf is inviſible ; for Chriſt, having the moſt intimate communication with him, has declared to us all that is of importance for us to know concerning him.

15. It was to him that John referred, when he proclaimed, ſaying, This was he of whom I ſpake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me ; that is, my chief, and him to whom I am ſubſervient. 19. And when a ſolemn deputation was ſent to him from the high Prieſts and Levites, he perſiſted in declaring that he was not himſelf the Chriſt, but one who was ſent to prepare the way for him.

SECTION II.

The Genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew and Luke.

Matt. I. 1.——17. Luke III. 23——38.

MATT. I. 1. The genealogy of Chriſt by Matthew is generally ſuppoſed to be that of Joſeph his reputed father, and that given by Luke to be that of his mother Mary, whom one of the Jewiſh rabbi's calls the daughter of Heli. But according to Euſebius it was a tradition in the family of Joſeph, that he was properly the *legal son* of Heli, who dying without children, his brother Jacob married his wife, and having a child by her, it was transferred to Heli.

If the genealogy of Matthew be compared with the correſponding genealogies of the Old Teſtament, it will be

be found to differ from them in ſeveral reſpects: but it is probable that it was ſuch a genealogy as was generally allowed to be of authority, and it ſufficiently proved the deſcent of Jeſus from David.

8. *Joram begot Ozias.*] Three kings of Judah, all deſcendants of David, are omitted in the genealogy, for Joram begat Ahaziah, Ahaziah begat Joaſh, Joaſh begat Amaziah, and Amaziah begat Uzziah, or Ozias. Whether this omiſſion was in the record copied by Matthew, or was made by ſome early tranſcriber, is not known. If the former be the caſe, the ſeventeenth verſe, which makes the generations between David and the Babyloniſh captivity to be no more than fourteen, muſt, as biſhop Pearce obſerves, be an interpolation.

11. *Jechonias.*] This, ſays Pearce, ſeems to have been a miſtake *for* Jehoiakim, who was the ſon of Joſiah, and originally called Eliakim, 2 Ch. xxxvi, 4. And becauſe ſome Greek MSS. read Ιακειμ, or Ιωακειμ, Schmidius, he ſays, conjectures that Matthew wrote the verſe thus, *and Joſiah begat Jehoiakim and his brethren* (viz. Jehoahas and Zedekiah) *and Jehoiakim begat Jechonias*, about the time that they were carried away to Babylon.

Luke III, 23. *About thirty years age.*] Thirty years of age was the time fixed by the Law for the Prieſts and Levites entering upon their office. Num. iv. 3.

SECTION III.

The Conception of John the Baptist.

Luke I. 5——25.

LUKE I, 5. *Of the course of Abia.*] There were twenty four families of prieſts, who officiated in their turns, a week at a time. That of Abia was the eighth in rank from the time of David, 1 Chron. xxiv. 3, 4.

10. Whilſt the prieſts were offering incenſe, it was the cuſtom for all preſent to be performing their private devotions. This appears from the hiſtory of Eli and Hannah, the mother of Samuel. Hence prayer is compared to incenſe.

13. John is the ſame with Johanan, in the Old Teſtament, and ſignifies a *favour from God.*

14. *From his mother's womb.*] This is a Jewiſh phraſe, ſignifying *from early youth.* Thus David ſays he was *born in iniquity*; and the wicked are ſaid to *go astray from the womb.*

17. *To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.*] As we frequently find the evangeliſts either quoting from memory, or bad traſlations, is it not adviſeable to abide by the words of the original rather than of Luke, which, however, tend to explain Malachi? In Malachi, from whence this prophecy is taken, the

words

words are, *he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers.* In Luke *he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.* This latter clause in Luke answers to the latter in Malachi, and the sense of the whole may be thus. "He shall "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, so that "they shall reflect upon the probable misery of their "posterity in consequence of the parents crimes, agree- "ably to the doctrine of the second commandment, "which threatens punishment even to the fourth gen- "eration; and affection for the children's prosperity "shall thus be a guard to the parent's obedience; and "also, He shall turn the disobedient children to imi- "tate the wisdom and revere the counsels of those fa- "thers that were worthy; and by both parties acting "thus, the land, i. e. the country of Judea, will not be "exposed to the just vengeance of heaven." J.

20. Dr. Shaw says that the ακριδες which John the Baptist fed upon in the wilderness were properly *locusts*; and that, provided they appeared in the Holy Land during the Spring, as they did in Barbary, it may be presumed that John entered upon his ministry at that season of the year, and that this was the time of his shewing himself unto Israel. But the account in Luke rather leads us to consider that his feeding on locusts was prior to his public preaching, tho' possibly continued afterwards.

25. *To take away my reproach.*] Barrenness was particularly reproachful among the Jews, being considered a kind of curse.

SECTION IV.

The Conception of Jesus, and the Birth of John the Baptist.

Luke I. 26——57.

LUKE I. 32, 33. *He shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest.*] Compare Is. ix, 6, 7, Where the words tranſlated, *The mighty God, The everlasting Father* may be rendered,' *The mighty God my Father for ever.* See this farther illuſtrated, Theological Repoſitory, Vol. III. p. 313.

34. *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man.*] It is obſervable that Mary expreſſes no ſurprize that the Meſſiah ſhould be born in the uſual courſe of generation; and as the common people at leaſt had no notion of the pre-exiſtence of ſouls, they could not have expected any other than a perſon who would be, in all reſpects, *a mere man*, and ſuch is their expectation concerning the Meſſiah to this day.

Πως εσαι τουτο *How can this be.*] There is great reaſon to ſuppoſe that the word μοι *(to me)* ſhould follow. But whether it does or not, I think theſe words may be farther urged to ſhew the certainty of the inference deduced above. Mary makes the circumſtance of her being a *virgin* a reaſon againſt the poſſibility of the Meſſiah being her offspring; and how is the difficulty removed by the angel? By declaring ſhe-

ſhe ſhall conceive by the immediate power of God; and to render this credible to her, he refers her to the caſe of her own relation Elizabeth, who, though in a different manner, had conceived out of the uſual courſe of nature. Mary, therefore, not only expreſſes no expectation of the Meſſiah's being born out of the ordinary courſe, but ſhe thinks it impoſſible for herſelf to be the mother of the Meſſiah from the very circumſtance of her being a virgin. It is to be ſuppoſed from the context, that by the angel's words Mary was led to believe this event would immediately take place, and hence the propriety of her queſtion. J.

45. *Bleſſed is ſhe that believed.*] Alluding to the ready faith of Mary, and the incredulity of her huſband in a ſimilar caſe.

48. μακαριουσι ſhall pronounce me fortunate or highly favoured. *See* Malachi iii, 12. See alſo the ſame ſentiments in the hymn of Hannah, 1 James ii. J.

54, 55. Εν τοι ſeems wanting before μνησθηναι. *In the remembrance of the mercy* promiſed *(As he ſpake) to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his ſeed for ever.*] Compare Gen. xvii, 7, 8. Pſ. cv. 8, and the following verſes. T.

SEC.

SECTION V.

The Circumcision of John, and the Propheoy of Zacharias.

Luke I. 58——80.

LUKE I. 63. *A writing table.*] Dr. Shaw ſays that the Mooriſh and Turkiſh boys in learning to write uſe no paper, but write upon thin ſmooth boards, ſlightly daubing them over with whiting, which may be wiped off, or renewed at pleaſure. Such, ſays he, probably (for the Jewiſh children did the ſame) was the πινακιδιον, or writing table, that was called for by Zacharias. *Shaw's travels*, p. 194.

69. *A horn of ſalvation.*] Horn is a figure denoting ſtrength and dignity.

70. *Since the world began.*] Literally, *from the age*, probably, in this place, from the commencement of the Iſraelitiſh nation.

70, 71. Encloſe the 70th verſe in crotchets: refer σωτηριαν in the beginning of the 71ſt verſe to χηρας σωτηριας in the 69th verſe: *A ſalvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us.* T.

74. *And ſaved from our enemies.*] Zacharias appears not to have had any idea of the Meſſiah different from that of a temporal prince like David.

73. Ποιησαι is underſtood as governing Ορκον: *to perform the oath.* T.

78. Here

78. Here ſeems a plain alluſion to Malachi iv. 2. therefore ανατολη ſhould rather be rendered *ſun riſing* than *day ſpring*. T.

The word ανατολη alſo ſignifies *a branch*, and therefore ſome ſuppoſe that it is a reference to Iſa. iv. 2, and other prophecies of the Meſſiah, which ſpeak of him as *a branch of the houſe of Jeſſe*, or David.

SECTION VI.

The Birth of Jeſus.

Matthew I. 18——25. Luke II. 1——20.

MATT. I. 19. Δικαιος, *a conſcientious man*, as we muſt tranſlate it in Luke xx, 20. ſuppoſing it poſſible that the allegation of Mary was true, and unwilling to bear the reproach, ſince moſt would believe her to be guilty, he took that courſe which a ſcrupulouſly juſt man would do. He would not expoſe her to the rigour of the law, Deut. xx. 22, &c. but rather declined the completion of the marriage, according to the power he had (Deut xxiv, 1) of divorcing her even if the marriage had been completed. J.

23. The prophecy here referred to is found Iſ. vii. 14. About the interpretation of it critics differ much.

Luke II. 1. *Enrolled.*]This was properly a *cenſus*, or an account of perſons and eſtates which Auguſtus ordered to be made through the whole Roman empire. This cenſus

cenſus was taken by Quirinius, who was afterwards governor of Syria. There was another cenſus taken of the Jewiſh nation, and at the ſame time a tax impoſed upon them, by the ſame Quirinius, on the death of Archilaus to which Luke refers.

1. *A manger.*] Sir John Chardin ſuppoſes by *a manger* in this place is meant one of thoſe holes of ſtone or good cement, which are to be ſeen in the ſtables belonging to the caravanſeras in the Eaſt, which are large enough to lay a child in; for they have no mangers like ours in the Eaſt. But he does not ſay what was the uſe of the holes he ſpeaks of. *Observations on travels into the East*, Vol. I, p. 443. But Pearce ſuppoſes that by mangers may be meant a coarſe hair cloth, out of which horſes eat their corn, as ſometimes with us; and that καταλυμα does not neceſſarily mean an *inn*, but a *great chamber*, ſuch a room as that in which our Saviour eat the paſſover with his diſciples, and which is called by the ſame name.

I look upon the word φατνη to mean a *hovel* or *ſtable*, it relates to the three verbs. Literally thus; ſhe brought forth, and wrapped in ſwadling clothes, and laid to reſt, her firſt born ſon, in a hovel, or outhouſe uſed for cattle, or a barn; for this reaſon, becauſe the inn itſelf was full of gueſts of higher ſtation. Wetſtein proves φατνη to mean ſtabulum. This is a good reaſon for her being delivered in an outhouſe, but none at all for laying the child in a manger. In all probability ſhe laid him to reſt either in her lap, or near where ſhe herſelf lay. I ſuppoſe a manger being ſomething like a cradle ſuggeſted the idea; v. 12 and 16 ſeem to confirm

confirm this, *Ye shall find the child lying in a stable*, which was a good direction by which to find Jesus. J.

20. Methinks the evangelist's meaning will be more perspicuous, if the comma be placed after *heard*, and omitted after *seen*. i. e. *for all that they had heard of the angels, and for having found what had been told them to be true.* T.

SECTION VII.

The Circumcision of Jesus, and the Prophecies of Simeon and Anna.

Luke II. 21——40.

LUKE II. 25. *The consolation of Israel;*] i. e. the coming of the Messiah.

27. I conceive that the second και in this verse is superfluous, and inserted by mistake. The evangelist seems to intend to point out the exact coincidence in point of time of Simeon's entrance into the temple and the bringing in of the child. T.

32. Φως εις αποκαλυψιν εθνων] Compare Is. xxv. 7. *And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.* T.

34, *A sign.*] The word σημειον sometimes signifies *a mark to shoot, or throw at.* The meaning of the verse seems to be, that the publication of the gospel would be a blessing to those who received it, and the occasion

occaſion of deſtruction to thoſe who rejected it. As the apoſtle ſays, to ſome it was a *ſavour of life*, and to others of *death*. The calamities that befel the Jewiſh nation are more eſpecially aſcribed to their wickedneſs in general, ſo more eſpecially to their ſin in killing Chriſt, their rejection of the goſpel, and their perſecution of the chriſtians.

34. *To all them who looked for redemption* or deliverance.] It appears from various evidence, that there was a general and earneſt expectation of the Meſſiah among the Jews about this time, and which continued to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and afterwards. This could only have been raiſed by the ancient prophecies.

39. The different narratives concerning our Lord's infancy, given us by Matthew and Luke, will, I think, appear very conſiſtent, if we only ſuppoſe that, immediately after the tranſactions at the temple, Joſeph and Mary went to Nazareth, as Luke ſays, but only to ſettle their affairs there, and ſoon after returned to Bethlehem, where the report of the ſhepherds, and the favourable impreſſions that report had made on the inhabitants (ſee v. 17, 18.) would ſuggeſt many cogent prudential motives to fix their abode. There they might have dwelt many months before the arrival of the wiſe men which Matthew relates. For the order for the ſlaughter of the children which Herod gave in purſuance of the diligent enquiry which he had made of the wiſe men, concerning the time when the ſtar appeared, gives us ground to conclude, that a conſiderable time had intervened between the birth of the child,

or

or the appearance of the ſtar (ſuppoſing them to coincide) and the coming of the wiſe men. It is obſervable alſo that on Joſeph's return from Egypt, his firſt intention ſeems to have been to go into Judea, moſt probably to Bethlehem, but through fear of Archelaus, and by a divine direction, he fixed at Nazareth, the place of his firſt abode. There he and his family were at the time of the only event of our Lord's childhood, which Luke has thought fit to give us; and therefore it was not to his purpoſe to take notice of any removal, or other place of abode. T.

40. *The Grace of God*, χαρις θεου] This may mean *an extraordinary grace*, or *gracefulneſs*, the term *God* being uſed in this manner in Hebrew for a ſuperlative, as mountains of God, rivers of God, &c. meaning very high mountains, very large rivers, &c. On this foundation *Macknight thinks* that Jeſus had a graceful or handſome perſon, notwithſtanding what is ſaid of him in Iſ. Liii. 2. *He has no form nor comeliness; and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him*, which he thinks will admit of another interpretation. But on the whole it is more probable that the *grace*, or *form of God* means the particular guidance of heaven, as his whole conduct, and the courſe of events, even from his infancy, indicated. J.

40. The words *in the ſpirit* are not in all the MSS, and are better omitted.

SEC-

SECTION VIII.

The Homage of the Magians; the Journey to Egypt, the Murder of the children at Bethlehem, and the return of Jesus to Nazareth.

Matt. II. 1——23.

MATTHEW II. 1. The *Magians* were persons who lived in colleges, studying astronomy, and other parts of natural knowledge, and they are said to have worshipped one God, without the use of images. Daniel accepted the office of master of the Magians, and many others of them were Jews. Pearce, therefore, thinks that, probably these Magians were Jews too. And indeed, it is not probable that a revelation of the birth of the Messiah would be made so early as this to any heathens. On the supposition that they were not Jews but Arabians, Mr. Turner conjectures that they understood this strange light to denote the birth of a great prince in the land of Judea, from their being acquainted with the prediction of their countryman Balaam. Numb. xxiv, 17.

What is here called a *star*, was probably a kind of meteor, which is often called αστηρ, or star, by Greek writers.

1. I think it had been better rendered, *Now after Jesus was born*—] This would have admitted the supposition of a considerable interval between the birth of Jesus and the coming of the wise men, which appears to me the truth; whereas our translation *when Jesus*

Jesus was born, imports that they came at the time, or ſoon after the birth. T.

11. In the Eaſt no perſons of rank are approached without a preſent; and the gifts of theſe Magians were ſuch as were proper to be preſented to a royal child. See *Observations on Travels into the East*, Vol. II. p. 23.

15. *Out of Egypt have I called my son.*] The prophecy referred to by the evangeliſt is Hoſea xi, 1. where the words here quoted occur. The application of the paſſage to Chriſt does not ſeem to be ſtrictly proper; ſince it cannot be pretended that, in the original, it refers to any thing more than the children of Iſrael, who had been in Egypt.

18. The paſſage in Jeremiah here referred to is ch. xxxi, 15. *In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel, weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.* But it does not appear to refer to the times of Chriſt; for the prophet is only ſpeaking of the condition of Rama in his own time, when the inhabitants of that place were carried into captivity, and he was prophecying of their return.

23. *He ſhall be called a Nazarene.*] This does not refer to any particular paſſage in any of the prophets, but to the general idea that is given of the Meſſiah in all the prophets, who ſpeak of him as a man who ſhould be *hated, reviled, perſecuted*, and *afflicted*, and the Hebrew word from which Nazareth is derived ſignifies this, as well as to *be ſeparated*, or ſequeſtered from other men; and the town of Nazareth itſelf was both in name, and

in reality, a deſpiſed place. See Dr. Hunt's ſermon on this ſubject. Some have thought that the evangeliſt referred to the Meſſiah being called נצר a branch; but the word *Nazarene* is not derived from this, but from נזיר, as mentioned above.

20. *They are dead that ſought the young child's life.*] Theſe were probably Herod and Antipater. See Mann on the time of the birth of Chriſt, p. 74, &c.

SECTION IX.

Jeſus goes to Jeruſalem at twelve years of age.
Luke II. 41——52.

42. AT twelve years of age the Jews reckoned their children capable of religion, and made them take upon them the yoke of the law. Benſon's Life of Chriſt, p. 1.

46. The teachers of the law uſed to expound it to the people in the apartments of the temple. There young men uſed to inquire of them, and be examined by them concerning it. We are not, therefore, to ſuppoſe that Jeſus, at the early age of twelve years, aſſumed the character of an inſtructor; but that he attended to the inſtructions of thoſe who were ſkilled in the law, and for his information aſked pertinent queſtions.

SEC-

SECTION X.

The Preaching of John, and the Baptism of Jesus.

Matt. III. 1——17. Mark I. 1——11.

Luke III. 1——18, 21, 22.

MATTHEW III. 2. The kingdom of heaven was a phraſe borrowed from Daniel ii. 44. vii. 13, 14.

4. There was nothing of exceſſive rigour, but only of great ſimplicity in John the Baptiſt's mode of living. Locuſts are very commonly eaten in the Eaſt; honey is rather a delicacy, but ſuch as that country afforded in great plenty; and a clothing of hair is to this day common in the ſame country. Camels hair is very uſeful for this purpoſe. *See Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. i, p. 298. Vol. ii, p. 407.

9. The Jews lay a moſt unreaſonable ſtreſs on their being the children of Abraham. Munſter quotes a paſſage from the Talmud, in which it is ſaid that Abraham ſits at the gates of hell, and ſuffers no wicked Iſraelite to go into it. See Doddrige.

12. *Winnowing ſhovel.*] This was the inſtrument generally uſed in Judea, to throw up the corn againſt the wind, which would blow away the chaff. The *fan* is an inſtrument that a man could not well take in his hand, at leaſt to make uſe of it.

As winnowing was done in the open air by the wind, it was uſual to ſet fire to the chaff, leſt, on a ſudden change of the wind, it ſhould be blown back into the wheat.

14. This verſe evidently implies ſome knowledge of Jeſus, in ſome view, at the time when it was addreſſed to him. But how are we to reconcile it with what the baptiſt ſays John i, 33, *I knew him not, but he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, "upon "whom thou ſhalt ſee the ſpirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he who baptizeth with the holy Spirit.* In order to reconcile theſe ſeemingly contradictory accounts, ſome have ſuppoſed that John had not even any perſonal knowledge of Jeſus, but only inferred his ſuperiority to himſelf, from peceiving a dignity, wiſdom and piety in his manner and converſation, which correſponded to his own idea of what the perſon he was ſent to announce muſt be, he ſuſpected that Jeſus might prove the perſon, and declined baptizing him on this account, tho' he *knew* him not till he ſaw the divine teſtimonial which had been foretold to him. But it is again ſuppoſed, and with great probability, that John who was the couſin of Jeſus, muſt have been acquainted with him before his baptiſm, and muſt have known his extraordinary character for wiſdom and piety, and that, on this account he ſaid, "*I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me?*" Mine is a baptiſm unto repentance, for the remiſſion of ſins, and therefore a rite which it would be better for me to ſubmit to from thee, than adminiſter to thee. But tho' he acknowledges Jeſus to be his ſuperior in theſe views, either from his former acquaintance with his character, or the diſcovery he made of it in the courſe of ſome previous converſation at the time, which is not recorded, he might ſtill with truth affirm, *I know him not*, i. e.

to

to be the ſame who ſhould baptize
Indeed he could not be entirely c
the promiſed ſign appeared.

But perhaps it is more prob
Matthew, who did not attend upo
after the commencement of his
whoſe attendance upon the bap
count, had been miſinformed wi
cumſtance; and this will not at all
evidence of chriſtianity, ſince ſuch different conceptions, and different repreſentations of circumſtances, are to be found in the moſt credible hiſtorians.

15. According to this account, Jeſus acquieſced in the acknowledgment of John, that he was his ſuperior, which he hardly would have done if he had not known himſelf to be ſo, and the *very perſon whom* he had announced *as ſuch*. On this account it is the more probable that Matthew did ſuppoſe that the baptiſt knew that Jeſus was the perſon whom he was ſent to announce before he baptized him. *To fulfill all righteouſness* muſt mean to comply with all the appointments of God. Our Lord virtually acknowledges that John's baptiſm was founded upon divine authority, and therefore however little propriety there might appear to be in the coming of him who was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners, along with a guilty multitude to a *baptiſm unto repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*, yet here was an inſtitution deſigned for general uſe, without particular exceptions, which did not at all interfere with any moral obligation, and with which therefore he thought himſelf bound to

comply. So different were our Lord's ſentiments and conduct from their's who neglect the poſitive inſtitutions of religion.

17. This moſt aſtoniſhing miracle was perhaps witneſſed by great numbers, and was ſomething ſimilar to that from Mount Sinai, tho' not of ſo long continuance, nor preceded by any extraordinary appearance, as thunder and lightning. Luke introduces his account of it with ſaying that *when all the people were baptized*, i. e. when people of all ranks or deſcriptions were baptized, it came to paſs alſo that Jeſus, being baptized, and praying, the heavens opened. The mention of the multitude in connection with Jeſus upon this occaſion makes it highly probable that there were many witneſſes to it; and ſome have thought our Lord alluded to this appearance, as ſeen by the multitude, when, upon recounting the different atteſtations of his divine miſſion, in a diſcourſe in the temple, he ſaid John v, 37. *Have ye not heard his voice, and ſeen his ſhape*, for ſo the original may be tranſlated. The whole tranſaction muſt have taken up ſome time. In the words of Matthew the heavens were opened unto him, and he i. e. John ſaw the ſpirit of God deſcending like a dove. Luke ſays *in a bodily appearance as a dove*, by which ſome underſtand not the *figure*, but the *motion* of a dove i. e. with an eaſy gentle deſcent, and lighting upon him. The evangeliſt proceeds, "*and lo! a voice from heaven, ſaying this is my beloved ſon in whom I am well pleaſed.*" It is imagined that Jeſus being thus called the *beloved ſon of God* upon this wonderful occaſion might lead him to call himſelf *the Son of God* and

and the *Son* by way of eminence, and to call God his father, without expreſsly announcing himſelf as the Meſſiah. For this he did upon all occaſions, and when it is evident that he had not informed even the apoſtles either that he was the Meſſiah, or that John the baptiſt was Elias, which would have amounted to the ſame thing.

Whether this deſcent of the ſpirit was manifeſted by its affecting Jeſus in any particular manner, as a ſimilar appearance did the apoſtles on the day of penticoſt, we are not informed.

Mark I. 3. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness,* &c.] This is an alluſion to the end of the 39th, and beginning of the 40th chapter of Iſaiah.

1. The fifteenth year of Tiberius Caſar immediately preceded that in which *the two Gemini were conſuls,* and in *that year, according to the teſtimony of all antiquity,* Jeſus was crucified; ſo that his miniſtry could not have laſted much more than a year, and John's not many months, and it does not contain more events than might eaſily fall within that ſpace of time. The preaching of the goſpel was only begun by our Lord, and was confined to Judea; and for the reſt the apoſtles and their ſucceſſors were abundantly ſufficient.

This Herod and Philip were two brother's ſons of Herod the great, and according to Joſephus, Philip was a man of an excellent character. His wife leaving him was received and married by Herod, who was very profligate. Lyſanias was probably deſcended from another perſon of the ſame name whom Anthony the

Roman general had made governor of the ſame country ſome time before.

2. Annas and Caiaphas are here both called high prieſts; but it is probable that the latter only held the office, while the former, who had been highprieſt before, retained the title, eſpecially as being father-in-law to Caiaphas, and a perſon of great conſideration in other reſpects. He ſeems from the account of Joſephus, to have had the chief influence in affairs both before and after the death of Jeſus.

3. John was opening a way for a new diſpenſation of religion, and he was no doubt authorized to do it by the inſtitution of a new rite. The Jews, indeed, admitted their proſelytes by baptiſm, tho' in the law of Moſes circumciſion only is expreſsly mentioned, and the purifications of the Jewiſh ritual bore a conſiderable reſemblance to it.

The Eſſenes, Joſephus ſays, received members into their ſociety by baptiſm. Spencer p. 1180.

Jonathan, in his paraphraſe on Exod. xxix, 4, ſays ſhe changed the garments of her captivity, bathed herſelf, and became a proſelyte in the houſe.

It appears that there was ſomething emblematical in this rite from the language of Ananias to Paul, Acts xxii, 16. "*Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy ſins,*" and alſo from that of Peter. 1 Epiſtle iii, 21. "*Baptism doth now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.*"

The Baptiſm of John ſeems to have had no refer-

ence

ance to chriſtianity but was only preceded by a profeſſion of repentance on the part of the perſon baptized, and an aſſurance that, in this caſe, all ſins would be forgiven. It is therefore called the *Baptism of repentance for the remission of sin.* The ſame rite is called *chriſtian baptism* after the promulgation of the goſpel, as it was uſed by Chriſt and his apoſtles, in conſequence of a profeſſion of faith in Jeſus as well as a declaration of repentance.

5. *Every valley shall be filled, &c.*] Alluding to pioneers clearing the way before a great perſonage.

6. Theſe verſes are a quotation from the beginning of the fortieth chapter of Iſaiah, and allude to the manner in which the Eaſtern princes travelled, with a large body of pioneers before them, to clear their way. The application of them to our Lord and his forerunner is ſufficiently obvious. It was the buſineſs of John, by calling the people to repentance, to remove the obſtacles which would prevent the reception of Jeſus as the true Meſſiah. The prophet ſeems to have had in view the future ſtate of the Jewiſh nation, when they ſhall be finally ſettled in their own country, under a prince of the houſe of David, but the language is properly employed to deſcribe the introduction of ſo joyful an event as the promulgation of the goſpel. Matthew ſays that John began his miniſtry with ſaying *repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This phraſe is taken from the prophecy of Daniel, in which there are ſeveral inſtances of ſimilar expreſſions. The Jews would, therefore, eaſily apply this, as they expected that the Meſſiah would

eſtabliſh

eſtabliſh an everlaſting kingdom, to be called *the kingdom of heaven*, agreeable to this prophecy.

7. If we compare this verſe with the ſeventh in the third of Matthew we ſhall find that John only addreſſed this language to the Phariſees and Saducees, who formed a part of the attendant multitude; and we ſhall repeatedly ſee in the courſe of the goſpel hiſtory, from our Saviour's own language, that John's addreſs was not ill ſuited to their character. The Phariſees carried their ſuperſtition to the utmoſt exceſs, multiplying ceremonies far beyond the injunctions of the law, and what is much worſe (indeed what principally conſtituted their guilt) at once ſubſtituting theſe external obſervances in the room of moral duties, and making them a cloak for great moral depravity, at the ſame time priding themſelves upon their peculiar holineſs; while the Saducees, on the other hand, were unbelievers in a future ſtate, and are ſaid to have been characterized by great profligacy of manners. Hence John appears to ſpeak the language of ſurprize, as well as reproach; *who hath warned you to fly from the wrath to come*: by the *wrath to come* he probably alludes to the concluſion of the propheſy of Malachi, who, after ſpeaking of an approaching day, that ſhall utterly *conſume the proud and evil doers*, adds, in the name of God, *Behold I will ſend you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

8. There is conſiderable harſhneſs in the figure of ſpeech uſed by the preacher in this place, in which men are compared to *ſtones*, dug out of a rock, or quarry, it being more uſual to compare them to the *branches*

or

or *leaves of trees*, the anceſtor being conſidered as the root, or ſtock, of the tree. But the ſame figure is uſed by the prophet Iſaiah, and to this John might allude; and the Jews having hardly any other books than their own ſcriptures, and all being able to read them, they were moſt minutely acquainted with them, and were perpetually quoting or alluding to them. Iſaiah ſays, Ch. LI, 2, *Look ye to the rock from which ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which ye were digged. Look unto Abraham your father.* The Jews, then, boaſting of their extraction from this ſource, the prophet informs them, that any other quarry, or ſtones, would ſerve the purpoſe of God's providence as well as that. Literally, indeed, no other could become the proper deſcendants of Abraham than his real poſterity; but God would take any other, even ſuch as they held in the greateſt contempt, and bring them into the ſame ſpiritual relation to himſelf, ſo as to be heirs of equal bleſſings.

14. Not Roman, but Jewiſh ſoldiers.

The preaching of John correſponded exactly with his inſtructions, which were to preach the *baptiſm of repentance*; all the perſons who applied to him being cautioned againſt thoſe vices to which their ſituations and circumſtances rendered them peculiarly prone; and at the ninth verſe there is a ſtrong intimation of ſome great approaching judgment which would fall on the impenitent. *And now the axe is laid to the root of the tree*, &c. In this there was, no doubt, an alluſion to the approaching deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the calamities which befel the Jewiſh nation, from which the chriſtians were exempted.

15 It

15. It was the object of John's miſſion *to prepare the way of the Lord*, and he purſued it, as we have already ſeen, by his baptiſm of repentance for remiſſion of ſins, to which he exhorted the people, by declaring that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But he ſeems not to have dwelt upon any particulars deſcriptive of the great prophet whoſe approach he announced, till the ſuſpicions or enquiries of the people, who were eagerly expecting the eſtabliſhment of the kingdom of heaven, as the accompliſhment of their prophecies, afforded him an opportunity of doing it with particular advantage. The Jews were prepared to receive the Meſſiah in the character of a prophet, as well as that of a king. This was evidently the idea of the woman of Samaria; and as the Jews appear to have regarded John as a true prophet, they might naturally (as we are told in the 15th verſe) *muse in their hearts* whether he was the Chriſt or not. But as ſoon as John perceived their ſuſpicions, he took effectual care to remove them, by declaring that another prophet, far ſuperior to himſelf, ſo far ſuperior that he was not worthy to looſe his ſhoes, would ſoon make his appearance; and as they expected none greater than the Meſſiah, they muſt conclude that he (John) could not be that perſonage. By *baptizing with the holy spirit and with fire*, John has been generally thought to refer to the deſcent of the holy ſpirit on the day of Pentecoſt, under the appearance of eleven tongues, or flames of fire; tho' it is doubted by ſome who adopt this interpretation, whether John underſtood his prophecy or not. But there is another interpretation which I ſhall mention in connection

nection with the ſubſequent verſe, from which it derives its probability.

17. John had before denounced the judgments of God againſt the impenitent in general, and now aſſerts that the perſon by whom this juſtice would be adminiſtered, would be he whoſe forerunner he was; who, like as the huſbandman ſeparates the chaff from the wheat, preſerves the grain and deſtroys the uſeleſs huſk, would diſtinguiſh between the righteous and the wicked, and aſſign them their portion according to their reſpective characters. By *unquenchable fire* is meant fire that will not be put out, but continue to burn till it has conſumed the chaff. Virtue will receive the recompence of reward, but vice will be finally deſtroyed. Here then we may have the idea of baptiſm both with the holy ſpirit, and with fire. Baptiſm properly means *plunging, or total immerſion in water*; but is applied figuratively to other things, and ſignifies doing any thing *totally* or *completely*, and the application is generally made to a ſtate of ſuffering rather than enjoyment, tho' it may be made to either. Thus an hiſtorian ſpeaking of a general who came with an army and made great havoc in a city, ſays he *baptized the city*. To *baptize with the holy ſpirit, and with fire*, may ſignify then, he ſhall communicate the holy ſpirit in profuſion, which may include the atteſtations from above to his divine miſſion with the effects which the acknowledgments of it would produce; but unto obſtinate and vicious unbelievers he will prove the miniſter of the divine judgments. He will baptize them with *unquenchable fire*, alluding moſt probably to the compleat overthrow

throw of the Jewiſh nation, to which he had before referred under the appellation of *the wrath to come.*

18. The evangeliſt no where intimates that he taught any other doctrine; By the expreſſion in this verſe we are therefore to underſtand nothing more than that he dwelt upon and illuſtrated thoſe which he juſt conſidered.

SECTION XI.

The Temptation of Jeſus.

Matt. IV. 1—11. Mark I, 12—13. Luke IV. 1—13.

CONSIDERING the very important miſſion of our Saviour, and what I muſt take for granted in this place that he was a man like any one of us, and who could therefore have no preparation for it but what he received from God at one period of his life or other, there muſt have been a time in which he was informed concerning his peculiar character as the Meſſiah and been inſtructed in all the particulars relating to it. The character he ſuſtained being ſo truly great and illuſtrious, the probability is that his mind was prepared for it gradually, and that he had intimations directly or indirectly conveyed to him pretty early in life, that he had ſome extraordinary part to act in it. That this was ſuppoſed to be the caſe we may collect from what Luke relates of his journey to Jeruſalem when twelve years old, at which time he called the temple *his father's houſe*, as well as from what Matthew relates of John

John the baptiſt conſidering him as his ſuperior and of Jeſus admitting that he was ſo. But I cannot ſay that I am diſpoſed to lay much ſtreſs upon either of theſe circumſtances. The extraordinary part that Jeſus acted afterwards would naturally prepare the minds of his followers to receive ſuch accounts as theſe on inſufficient evidence.

Independent of any accounts of this kind, it is probable in itſelf, that ſome intimation would be given to Jeſus of his having more important buſineſs in the world than that of other men. Becauſe had a plain man, in the lower ranks of life, tho' of a virtuous conduct and a pious diſpoſition, been informed all at once that he was the Meſſiah, even ſuch a one as the Jews expected in that character, and much more ſuch a one as Jeſus was to be (which was infinitely greater) his mind would have been overwhelmed with it. We may conjecture, therefore, that he was at leaſt divinely directed, to go to the baptiſm of John, and prepared to expect ſomething extraordinary on that occaſion, whether he was particularly informed concerning the actual appearance or not. It is probable, however, that Jeſus was not fully inſtructed in the particulars of his character and miſſion till after the viſible deſcent of the ſpirit of God upon him at his baptiſm, and we are naturally led to ſuppoſe that this was the buſineſs of the forty days which preceded his temptation, which forty days he paſſed in the wilderneſs no doubt in abſolute ſolitude; and as we are informed without eating or drinking. This ſo much reſembles the caſe of Moſes, who was on mount Sinai the ſame number of days, faſting alſo, and in communion

munion with God, that we are naturally led to ſuppoſe that theſe forty days in the life of Jeſus were paſſed in a ſimilar manner; and this might be ſufficient to prepare his mind for all that he had to do and ſuffer, eſpecially as he was not called to immediate action. It may be further conjectured (and in this caſe we are unavoidably left very much to our conjectures) that Jeſus paſſing theſe forty days in a ſtate of peculiar communion with God (in all which time he was without food and probably alſo without ſleep) would imagine himſelf to be in what is commonly called *heaven*, where God is ſuppoſed to reſide; as Paul imagined that he was caught up into the third heaven during his viſion or trance. On this eaſy hypotheſis we may ſuppoſe that it was to this being in heaven, and with God, that Jeſus might allude (when he ſaid that he had *come down from heaven*, and was to *aſcend up to where he had been before*, tho' theſe phraſes do not neceſſarily imply any thing more than his having received a miſſion from God; and they might have been applied to the caſe of any other prophets, who are indeed alſo ſaid to have been *ſent of God*, and even to *come from God*, as if they had been in heaven where God is ſuppoſed to be.

By the *ſpirit* we are, no doubt, to underſtand the ſpirit of God, and the phraſes *Led by the ſpirit*, and *being in the ſpirit*, are ſuppoſed to be uſed in the ſcriptures to expreſs what is called a *viſion*, in which the natural impreſſion of viſible objects is prevented, and the mind becomes ſubject to other impreſſions from the immediate agency of God. It has therefore been ſuppoſed with great probability, that this temptation was ſomething

that

that paſſed in a viſion, ſucceeding that in which he had been inſtructed in the particulars concerning his miſſion. It conſiſted of ſuch ſcenes, as when our Lord reflected upon them, would prepare him for the difficulties he would meet with in the courſe of his miniſtry, and ſome of which, at leaſt, evidently aroſe out of the particular nature of his character and office. That the whole of this temptation could not poſſibly be a real tranſaction, is evident from the nature of ſome of the particulars, a circumſtance which itſelf makes it probable that the whole is to be underſtood with a ſimilar latitude of interpretation. For we cannot ſuppoſe that one part of the ſame relation is true in a literal, and the other only in a figurative ſenſe.

The agent in this temptation is called *the Devil*, the ſame that in the Old Teſtament is called *Satan*, and this is probably not a real, but an allegorical perſonage, the *principle*, or *cauſe of evil* in general, natural or moral. The heathens, indeed, ſuppoſed that there was a real being, a great and malignant ſpirit who was the author of all the evil in the world; becauſe they could not account for it on any other principle. But this is by no means the doctrine of the ſcriptures, in which good and evil are equally aſcribed to the ſame good being, to whoſe excellent purpoſes evil is as ſubſervient as good. Even temptations to ſin, which are commonly aſcribed to the ſuggeſtions of this evil ſpirit, are by the apoſtle James moſt expreſsly aſcribed to a man's ſelf; when he ſays (chapters the firſt and fourteenth) Every man is tempted when he is drawn aſide by his own luſts, and inticed. Beſides, in the

language of ſcripture, any thing that is evil is called Satan, or the Devil, and is not always ſaid to come from him. Thus when Peter ſuggeſted to our Saviour an improper thought, he ſaid (Matthew xvi, 23) *get thee behind me Satan.* Thou i. e. thou, Peter, *savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* And when he ſpoke of the traiterous deſigns of Judas he ſaid (John vi, 70) *Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is the devil,* as the phraſe may be moſt naturally rendered. It is probable, therefore, that the ſacred writers themſelves (tho' there is no inconvenience in ſuppoſing that they had adopted the opinion of their neighbours concerning a great and malignant evil being, as they did the doctrine of Dæmons) uſe the term Satan, or Devil, as expreſſive of the principle of evil in general, and that they had no idea of the real exiſtence of ſuch a being as the Devil is ſuppoſed to be. Nothing, indeed, can be more improbable than the exiſtence of ſuch a being as the Devil, who in the vulgar opinion is a kind of rival of the ſupreme Being, preſent in every place at the ſame time, or in the quickeſt poſſible ſucceſſion, knowing every thing, even the thoughts of men's hearts, which, if any thing, is ſurely the prerogative of God only, and almoſt omnipotent.

For in the ſcriptures there is no mention made of more than *one Devil,* and ſuch alſo is the common opinion, tho' it is imagined that he has inferior evil ſpirits acting under him. If this appearance paſſed in viſion, there might be the appearance of ſome perſon in the character of the tempter. So we read in the 2nd of Chron. xviii, 20—that the prophet Micaiah in a viſion ſaw

ſaw a lying ſpirit in the preſence of God, and in the ſcenical repreſentation of the book of Job, Satan is deſcribed as ſtanding along with the angels in converſation with God.

As many perſons will after all, think it unnatural to ſuppoſe that ſpeech and action ſhould be aſcribed to a mere allegorical perſon, let them conſider in what manner the *Comforter*, or ſpirit of God, is deſcribed by our Saviour. For in his repreſentation, words and actions are aſcribed to him, as if he had been a real perſon, diſtinct from God, whoſe ſpirit he is, John xiv, 26. *But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* Ch. xvi, 13, 14. *Howbeit when the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak. And he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me. For he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.* Notwithſtanding this ſtrongly figurative language, it is evident from the apoſtle Paul, Cor. i, 2, 11, that the ſpirit of God is no more a beingdiſtinct from God, than the ſpirit of man is a being diſtinct from the man.

2. We muſt obſerve that the ſcene which is called *the temptation* followed the interval of forty days and forty nights, as this verſe expreſsly informs us; tho', from the leſs particular accounts of Mark and Luke, we might have concluded that the whole forty days and nights had been taken up with the temptation. Indeed it was the circumſtance of the tempta-

tion's being after this length of time, which greatly adds to the probability of his temptation having been in a viſion.

3. This temptation is addreſſed to the preſſing neceſſities of hunger, after a faſt of ſo long a time, and to the gratification of his vanity, in proving himſelf to be the ſon of God by working a miracle for his relief. This is a temptation to which he muſt often have been expoſed in the courſe of his miniſtry, when he had no other means of ſupplying the wants of nature; and no doubt it was to prepare him for withſtanding them, that he was now preſented with this. We find in fact that to whatever ſtreights our Lord was reduced, whether he was hungry, thirſty, or weary, he never attempted to work a miracle for his relief, but ſubmitted to the infirmities of our nature, and was ſupported through them. It was one object of Chriſt's miſſion to ſet us an example of unſhaken ſubmiſſion to the divine will in every circumſtance; but he could not have exhibitted this pattern if, inſtead of bearing his trials, he had exerted his miraculous power to remove them.

4. This is a quotation from the book of Deut. and implies that whatever God is pleaſed to appoint, he will either afford a means of ſubſiſtence, or make ſome other adequate proviſion for our ſupport. Jeſus always replies to the tempter in the words of ſcripture, which the Jews applied on all occaſions, and often without much regard to the original meaning of the paſſage.

7. Jeſus had been declared to be the *Son of God* at his baptiſm, and to this, no doubt, there is an alluſion here; but it does not neceſſarily follow that it implied his

his being the Meſſiah. It was ſufficient for the purpoſe of the tempter that it implied a ſtate of high favour with God. From the nature of this temptation it is evident that it could not be a real tranſaction. For it cannot be ſuppoſed that Jeſus was carried through the air at the pleaſure of ſuch a being, and placed upon a pinnacle of the temple, probably in the view of many thouſands of people. Our Saviour is here addreſſed by a miſapplication of a text of ſcripture. But what was promiſed under particular circumſtances, could never be deſigned to extend to all circumſtances. This is the principle of our Lord's anſwer. We are never to make trial how far the Divine goodneſs will extend by wantonly expoſing ourſelves to unneceſſary difficulties, which is in fact inſulting it. Or by *tempting God* may mean in this place diſtruſting God, which is the meaning of the paſſage as it ſtands in Deut. which our Lord has quoted upon this occaſion. *It is written thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, why ſhould I aſk any further proof of my being the Son of God, than has been already given by a voice from heaven, for that purpoſe? This interpretation, however, may be reduced to the general principle above ſuggeſted.

10. This ſcene muſt neceſſarily have paſſed in viſion, and not in reality. For we muſt know that there neither is, nor could be, any mountain from which all the kingdoms of the earth, and ſtill leſs the glory of them, i. e. their riches, power, and ſplendor, could be ſeen. Such a ſuppoſition would imply more abſurdities than one. Beſides Luke adds it was all done in a *moment of time*

time. The moral leſſon of this temptation was, that the kingdom of Chriſt was not to be of this world, and that he was by no means to affect that power which the Jews aſcribed to their Meſſiah, or to appear in the pomp of earthly princes.

It is poſſible that nothing more may be meant by the whole of this account, than that certain evil ſuggeſtions occurred to our Lord's own mind upon his being declared to be the Son of God, and after having received divine communications to qualify him for his office; and if he were a man, it is impoſſible but ſuch thoughts as theſe muſt have occurred to his mind, tho' from a principle of piety he rejected them. Indeed, the whole of this ſcene proves that Jeſus was properly a man, expoſed to the ſame temptations with other men, and liable to be influenced by them; and that he was neither God nor any ſuperior being, the maker of the world and all things under God. For what would the offer of the kingdoms of this world have been to ſuch a being as this?

11. i. e. They neither ſupplied him with food, or afforded him that relief which he muſt have wanted, notwithſtanding he was miraculouſly ſupported through the preceding faſt of forty days.

As this temptation ſeems to have been intended to inſtruct Jeſus with reſpect to the uſe that he was to make of his miraculous powers, ſome have ſuppoſed that thoſe powers were at his command, as much as the power of ſpeaking or walking are at the command of ordinary men. And, indeed, in general Jeſus did work miracles with leſs preparation, and in a more authoritative

thoritative manner, than any other prophet; as when he ſaid to the leper *I will, be thou clean*. But other facts ſeem to ſhew that mental prayer preceded all his miracles, as well as before he raiſed Lazarus from the dead, which he did in the ſame authoritative and ſeemingly independent manner, ſaying *Lazarus come forth*. For in his addreſs to his father on this occaſion he ſaid, *I know that thou hearest me always*. Alſo when he was betrayed he ſaid he could have prayed to his Father, and he would have ſent legions of angels to reſcue him from his enemies. What occaſion would there have been for this prayer, if the angels had been his proper ſervants. Alſo, if it had been poſſible, which it was not, that Jeſus ſhould have been diſpoſed to work an improper miracle, we cannot think that it would have taken place. And if it had been poſſible at all, it might have been ſo tho' he had been the higheſt of created beings. For they are all neceſſarily imperfect. But the proper object of this temptation, and inſtruction from above, might be to diſcipline his mind, that he might thoroughly underſtand his ſituation; and then no improper wiſh of this kind would ever enter his mind.

SECTION XII.

The Testimony of John concerning Jesus.

John I. 19.——34.

THE appearance of ſo extraordinary a perſon as John the Baptiſt declaring that *he came from God*, which had not been pretended to for four hundred years before, and in a nation which in former ages had been favoured with many prophets, and profeſſed a great veneration, for them, could not but excite the greateſt attention, eſpecially as they were now expecting one greater than all their preceding prophets. Beſides the enquiries which were made, no doubt in a more private way, we are not ſurprized at a more ſolemn deputation of the principal perſons of the nation, probably the Sanhedrim, or chief court of judicature, in the country, to procure information of his proper character and pretenſions, of which we have an account in this chapter.

As it does not appear that John opened his commiſſion with any application to the chief rulers, but began by addreſſing the common people, it ſeems the former took umbrage at him; and had they not feared the multitude, who venerated him, they would have declared againſt him. We may gather John's ſentiments of them from Matthew iii, 7. *But when he saw the Scribes and Pharisees came to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the*

the wrath to come? and our Saviour's ſentiments were ſimilar. The rulers of the nation having received no application from John, now that his general popularity began to give them ſome alarm, ſent a formal deputation to him when he was in the country beyond Jordan, probably with an inſidious deſign, ſuch as frequently appeared in their conduct to our Saviour afterwards. Their profeſſed object, however, was to hear from himſelf, whether he was either the Meſſiah, or ſome one ſent to announce his coming. But they, no doubt, expected the Meſſiah would declare himſelf to *them* in the firſt inſtance, as being of moſt conſequence in the country.

21. As all the Jews expected that Elias was to be the forerunner of the Meſſiah, and to anoint him, which had been the cuſtom of prophets in reſpect to kings in former times, this ſolemn declaration of John, that he was not Elias, not only proves that he did not know himſelf to be that perſon, but that he did not know that Jeſus was the Meſſiah. This obſervation is of great importance to our underſtanding the Goſpel Hiſtory, and was firſt ſuggeſted by Mr. Palmer in the Theological Repoſitory.

So different was Jeſus from what the Jews expected of their Meſſiah, that it was of conſequence he ſhould not be generally known in that character. Accordingly our Saviour acknowledged it with great caution, and only in private to his apoſtles, a conſiderable time after the commencement of his public miniſtry, which would have been unneceſſary if John had informed all the country that he was commiſſioned by God to annonnce

nounce him to all the people in that character. After ſuch an authentic declaration it would have been ſtrange to affect any ſecrecy. So little had Jeſus ſaid upon the ſubject, notwithſtanding his teaching in the temple, and other places, that at his trial, the high prieſt thought it proper to have the declaration from his own mouth, in open court, which would have been unneceſſary if they had been able to procure ſufficient proof of the ſame thing from others. John, therefore, tho' he had it in commiſſion from God to announce Jeſus as a prophet greatly ſuperior to himſelf, appears not to have known preciſely what his character was, and we ſee he was cautious not to exceed his commiſſion.

23. If we conſult the original paſſage in Iſaiah, we ſhall ſee this only relates to that glorious ſtate of things which is to take place on the re-eſtabliſhment of the Jews in their country. But ſuch expreſſions might be naturally applied to the caſe of John the Baptiſt, or any perſon whoſe buſineſs it was to introduce a happy change of things, which was certainly done by the preaching of the goſpel.

25. There is little doubt that proſelytes were admitted into the Jewiſh religion by baptiſm. Hence it would be conſidered as an introduction into the profeſſion of a new religion, and accordingly they enquire why John, who declared he was neither Elias, the Chriſt, nor the prophet, baptized. They conceived that this rite would be ſuitable to the Meſſiah, his forerunner, or the other expected prophet; becauſe tho' the Meſſiah was not in their ideas to abrogate their religion, he was to effect a wonderful revolution both in a civil

a civil and a religious view. How they came to ſubmit ſo generally to the baptiſm of John, as none of the prophets uſed ſuch a ceremony, and they could not account for it in him, does not eaſily appear. Perhaps it was a compliance occaſioned by their reſpect for his character, and their general reception of him as a prophet.

26. John ſeems to ſay that his baptiſm was not that of *proſelitism*, but only of *repentance*, which might tend to obviate their cavils, as if he had preached a new religion. That the Jews at this time baptized, as well as circumciſed, their proſelytes cannot, I think, be doubted.

29. If John did not know that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, he could not refer to his death, when he ſaid "*Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the ſins of the world.*" But the innocence of our Lord's character, and the effect of his preaching, which John certainly expected would produce a great reformation in the world, ſufficiently juſtifies the compariſon.

30. It is evident not only that John had no idea of Jeſus being any other than a mere man, but that he was ſo termed by the Divine Being from whom he received his commiſſion. For John appears to have been remarkably exact in keeping to the very words of it, in other particulars, and therefore, no doubt, in this. He had been informed that his miſſion had been ſubſervient to that of a great prophet, and alſo that this prophet was *a man*. Had he therefore been any thing more than a man, John would have been led into an error by God himſelf, and his high authority would be the means of

leadng

leading others into errors alſo. Since, therefore, John ſays that he who was to come after him, was to be *a man*, we muſt take it for granted that he was ſo, and in himſelf conſidered nothing more; *a man*, as Peter calls him in Acts ii, *approved of God*.

31. That is, I knew him not to be the perſon I was ſent to announce before I ſaw the appointed ſign.

32. John keeps ſtrictly to the terms of his commiſſion. He ſays not that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, but only a greater prophet, to whoſe miſſion his own was introductory, and who would baptize with the holy ſpirit, and with fire.

34. The term *Son of God*, is not neceſſarily equivalent to the Meſſiah, tho' properly applied to him by way of eminence, as the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſon of God. *Son of God* was the appellation John heard by the voice from heaven, and he keeps ſtrictly to it.

SECTION. XIII.

The diſciples of John and Nathaniel attend Jeſus.

John I. 35.——51.

IT is obſerved by early chriſtian writers that John is the only evangeliſt who gives an account of the firſt part of the miniſtry of Jeſus. Indeed he appears to have been beſt acquainted with it, having probably been one of Jeſus's firſt diſciples, after having been the diſciple of the baptiſt, and to have accompanied him in his firſt journey from Jordan to Galilee, where

where he was probably present at his first miracle, that of changing water into wine. The following narrative is so circumstantial, that it appears to have been the composition of an eye witness, and written with that simplicity which distinguishes the historical writings of scripture in general, and those of John in particular. This view of it is a sufficient proof of the veracity of the writer.

35. The day after the testimony that John gave to Jesus on receiving the deputation of the Scribes and Pharisees to him.

37. One of these was probably John, the writer of this Gospel.

39. About our four in the afternoon, or towards evening.

41. This was a natural conjecture, but not authorized by any thing John had said. The disciples of John, having a high opinion of their master, might conclude that a person so superior to him as Jesus was declared to be, could be no other than the Messiah; and they might think that tho' John was not the Elias, the true Elias would make his appearance in due time, and anoint Jesus, which was the chief thing they expected, or that the Jews now expect, from Elias. They say that he is not to appear till the day before the Messiah will be revealed.

42. *Thou art Simon*, &c.] According to John, Jesus gave the surname of *Peter*, or *Cephas*, to Simon before the time that Matthew affirms it to have been given. Pearce.

It is

It is cuſtomary in the Eaſt for perſons to take new names from circumſtances that occur in the courſe of their lives, and ſometimes they are called by the one or the other indifferently. So Peter is ſometimes called Simon, which was his original name, as when Jeſus ſays to him John xxi, 15. *Simon ſon of Jonas loveſt thou me ?*

45. We are not to infer from hence that there are diſtinct prophecies in the books of Moſes concerning the Meſſiah ; but ſuch was the conſtruction which was uſually put upon ſeveral paſſages both in the writings of Moſes, and in the Pſalms, by the Jews of that age. Moſes, however, foretells that glorious ſtate of the Jewiſh nation in the latter days to which the promulgation of chriſtianity itſelf, and conſequently the miſſion of Chriſt, would be introductory. This Nathaniel is ſuppoſed to be the ſame perſon with Bartholomew one of the Apoſtles.

48. The Jews, living in a hot climate took particular pleaſure in ſitting under the ſhade of figtrees, and other trees of thick foliage, through which the rays of the ſun could not penetrate. There they might read, meditate, or pray ; and it is probable that in ſome ſuch pious manner Nathaniel had been employed.

50. This ſeems to have been an acknowledgment on the part of Jeſus himſelf that he was the Meſſiah ; and he certainly never denied it, but on the contrary did every thing to lead the people to *conclude* it. But he made no public declaration to that purpoſe, and long after this, when (probably in conſequence of his ſaying nothing about it, and eſpecially his not aſſuming

ing what were deemed the eſſential characters of the Meſſiah) the Apoſtles themſelves ſeem to have abandoned the idea, he informed them of it, but as a thing they were not to publiſh.

51. *Ye ſhall ſee the heaven open*, &c.] This muſt be a figurative expreſſion, denoting the manifeſt ſigns of the preſence of God with Jeſus in his miraculous works, &c. ſo that there would be a viſible intercourſe between heaven and earth, ſuch as was repreſented to Jacob in the viſion of the ladder, on which angels were ſeen aſcending and deſcending.

SECTION XIV.

The Marriage Feaſt at Cana.

John II. 1——12.

WE are now entering on the conſideration of the proper life of Jeſus, when he began to appear in public, and work miracles in confirmation of his divine miſſion. This muſt have appeared an extraordinary circumſtance to the Jews, whoſe anceſtors had ſeen miracles, but none of that generation, or of many preceding ones.

The miracles of Jeſus were of two kinds. In general they were inſtances of benevolence as well as of power. This which we are about to conſider was a conjunction of both; as his walking on the ſea, his ſtilling a tempeſt, and making the barren fig tree to wither, were chiefly of the latter kind. None of them were

were accompanied with any marks of oſtentation, or had his own relief or advantage for their object. It is probable from the courſe of the narrative, that only a ſmall number of the miracles are recorded by any of the evangeliſts; but thoſe that are, were no doubt, the moſt remarkable, and they were all attended with ſuch circumſtances, as make it evident that there was no deception, or trick, in the conduct of them.

1. This was the third day from their ſetting out on their Journey to Gallilee, mentioned i. 43. From other circumſtances too it appears that from Jeruſalem to Gallilee was a journey of three days on foot. Thus Jeſus when he was in Gallilee, ſays (Luke xiii, 33,) *I must walk to day, and tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.* The diſtance was about ſixty miles.

3. Tho' it is probable that the mother of Jeſus was acquainted with his power of working miracles, it does not certainly follow that he had actually performed any: She muſt have known the teſtimony of John to Jeſus, and probably he had informed her of the particulars of his temptation, which implied his power of working miracles, the tempter having bid him change the ſtones into bread, and he declined, not from a want of power, but not to tempt God.

As no mention is made of Joſeph the huſband of Mary, either on this occaſion, or on any other in the courſe of the hiſtory, it is probable that he was dead before this time.

4. That is, the proper ſeaſon for working miracles.

This

This ſtyle of addreſs, however it may appear to us, was uſual with the antients when the greateſt reſpect was intended. The ſame obſervation will apply to Jeſus ſaying to his mother, *what haſt thou to do with me.* In the very ſame language(τι εμοι και σοι) Jephtha addreſſed the king of the Ammonites. Jud. xi, 22.

5. It is plain from the order that Mary gave to the ſervants, that ſhe underſtood her ſon as conſenting to, rather than rejecting, her requeſt. At leaſt there muſt have been ſome circumſtance in the diſcourſe or behaviour of Jeſus which indicated as much, tho' he might not think proper to act as at her ſuggeſtion.

6. This *firkin* might be the Hebrew *bath*, which contained about four gallons and an half.

7. This great quantity of water that was changed into wine, ſhews that there was no deception in the caſe. For tho' a ſmall quantity of water might, by ſlight of hand, be made to diſappear, and an equal quantity of wine to take its place; in the ſame manner as it is probable that blood had been ſubſtitued for water in the pretended miracle of the Egyptian magicians, this could not have been done with ſo large a quantity of water as was employed on this occaſion; and ſtill leſs in the miracle performed by Moſes, when all the water in the river Nile was changed. Beſides, it was not Jeſus, or his diſciples, but the ſervants of the houſe that brought the water.

10. This encomium given by a perſon who was ignorant of the manner in which the wine was procured, proves the reality of the change, and the excellence of its quality.

The word in the original which is here rendered *when men have well drunk*, affords no foundation for ſuppoſing that any of the company were intoxicated. It is often uſed to denote drinking ſo as to produce cheerfulneſs, but within the limits of ſobriety. It is evident from the pleaſantry of the governor of the feaſt, that he at leaſt was ſober enough to diſtinguiſh the quality of the wine he drank.

11. By this miracle the diſciples of Jeſus were confirmed in their belief of his being the great prophet which John had announced him to be; and it is probable that at this time they would ſuppoſe him to be *the Meſſiah*, and would continue in that belief till they ſaw he took no ſteps to aſſume that kingly power, which they thought to be eſſential to that character. But tho' on this account, it is probable their faith in his being the Meſſiah was much ſtaggered, and perhaps altogether abandoned, they ſtill adhered to him as a great prophet.

12 Jeſus's parents and himſelf were of Nazareth, that, in my opinion, being his native place, and from this circumſtance he was called *a Nazarene*, it being uſual with the Jews to give perſons an appellation from the place of their nativity; and both the Jews in general, and our Lord's own diſciples after his reſurrection, uſually called him *Jeſus of Nazareth*. But the family of Jeſus ſeems to have removed from that place to Capernaum, a little before the firſt paſſover which Jeſus attended in his new and public character at Jeruſalem.

SEC-

SECTION XV.

The Converſation of Jeſus with Nicodemus.

John II. 13——25. III. 1——21.

ACCORDING to the law of Moſes, every male of a proper age was obliged to attend at the place which God ſhould fix upon for that purpoſe, three times every year, viz. at the paſſover, the feaſt of pentecoſt, and of tabernacles. Jeſus went from Galilee to Jeruſalem on theſe occaſions, and it was ſuch an opportunity of making himſelf generally known, as could not have been found in any other country, and on this account much leſs time was neceſſary for his public miniſtry. Indeed not only men, but women who could conveniently do it, attended. Here he was ſure to meet with the moſt pious and well informed of his countrymen, and whatever he did to attract notice could not but be ſoon known in the moſt diſtant parts of the country.

23. In this place we find an account of his cleanſing the temple which the other evangeliſts refer to the laſt time of his viſiting Jeruſalem; and that appears to me to be its proper place in the hiſtory. I am almoſt inclined to think that the account of the converſence with Nicodemus, which immediately follows, and is connected with this, is out of its place, and ſhould alſo be referred to the laſt paſſover; ſo that the 12th verſe of

the 2nd chapter ought to be followed by the 22nd verſe of the third chapter. This will make a much more conſiſtent hiſtory.

There are other evident tranſpoſitions in this Goſpel of John. Some have been clearly pointed out by learned men, and there may be others which have not been ſuſpected. The probability is that John, being very old when he wrote his goſpel, did it in ſeparate parts, and perhaps with the aſſiſtance of others, who wrote from the accounts he gave them, and who put the different parts together as well as they could. This was a matter of ſmall conſequence; but the dying teſtimony, as it were, of ſo old an apoſtle, the ſubſtance of what he was able to recollect of his maſter's actions and diſcourſes, eſpecially ſuch as had been omitted by the other evangeliſts, muſt have been much valued, in whatever manner their different parts were arranged.

According to all the other evangeliſts, Jeſus began to preach in Galilee after this paſſover. It appears, however, from this evangeliſt, if there be nothing miſplaced in his goſpel, that Jeſus did work miracles, which would not have been without *teaching*, at his firſt paſſover, tho' we have no account of the particulars.

24. *Bybelieving on him*, we are only to underſtand their conviction that he was a teacher ſent from God. For he certainly had not announced himſelf as the Meſſiah to the people in general.

25. He did not put any confidence in them, or perhaps admit them to the number of his profeſſed diſciples, or followers; well knowing that they had not the proper qualifications for adherence to him.

Ch:

Ch. III. 1. This diſcourſe with Nicodemus ſeems to be introduced as an illuſtration, or proof of what he had ſaid of Jeſus *knowing what was in man*, or the real views of men, which he might be able to do in part by his own natural ſagacity, but chiefly, as it ſhould ſeem, by divine communication.

3. This converſation between Jeſus and Nicodemus, at which it is probable that this evangeliſt, as well as others of the apoſtles, were preſent, has more difficulty in it than any other part of the goſpel hiſtory. I have ſeen it at different times in different lights. This is probably owing to much of it being omitted, and a want of connection between the ſeveral parts. There appears, for example, no connection between the words of Nicodemus and this reply of Jeſus; but we may ſuppoſe that after Nicodemus had acknowledged that he muſt have a divine commiſſion, he concluded that *the kingdom of God*, which both Jeſus and John had declared to be at hand, was certainly approaching; but that he ſaw no reaſon why men ſhould be baptized into that belief, which John, and no doubt our Saviour after him, had required. Neither Jeſus nor John had ſaid any thing about being *born again*. But this baptizing, as it was conducted by John and our Saviour, might well bear to be ſo characterized, according to the Jewiſh phraſeology. And this is the more probable, as, when any gentile became a proſelyte to the Jewiſh religion, (in conſequence of which he was both baptized and circumciſed) he was ſaid to be *born again*, entering as it were upon a new kind of life. Jeſus therefore ſaying that a man muſt be born again before

he can ſee the kingdom of God, might only mean to aſſure Nicodemus that both John and himſelf had ſufficient authority for baptizing even Jews on their profeſſion of repentance, as a preparation for the approaching kingdom of God; tho', conceiving themſelves already to be of the family of God, they might think there was no need of ſuch a ceremony to introduce them into it.

It is ſomething remarkable that the Hindoos ſpeak of a ſecond birth from acquiring a knowledge of their *vedas*, which may be called their *ſcriptures*; and the phraſe *twice born* is in a manner ſynonymous to a *Bramin*.

4. That Jeſus had not uſed the particular phraſe before, is pretty evident from the ſurprize which Nicodemus expreſſes, and he no doubt intended by this means to draw the true meaning of his language from him.

6. Here Jeſus informs Nicodemus, that the *new birth* he ſpake of, is being *born of water and of the ſpirit*; and as John had declared his authority for baptizing with water, and had ſaid that Jeſus would baptize with the holy ſpirit, it is moſt probable that theſe were the things referred to by Jeſus in this converſation. Some have, however, ſuppoſed that being *born of water* means the natural birth of every man, which they ſay the Jews ſo expreſſed; and that this is oppoſed to being *born of the ſpirit*, which ſignifies either a change of temper and diſpoſition of mind, equivalent to a man's entering a new life, or to the deſcent of the ſpirit on the day of pentecoſt. They therefore ſuppoſe that being *born of water*, and born of *the flesh* mean the

the ſame thing. But I rather incline to the ſuppoſition that by being *born of the flesh* our Lord meant a *natural birth*, and the privileges conſequent upon it, and by being *born of the ſpirit*, the new birth which, tho' begun by baptiſm with water, would be completed by baptizing with the holy ſpirit.

What we render *born again* may be alſo rendered *born from above*, and the meaning then will be every perſon who is received into the kingdom of God muſt be born of God, or have an introduction into it ſuitable to its nature; ſtill however, referring to the miraculous gifts of the ſpirit, and not, as I imagine, to an inward change of temper, tho' that will, no doubt, be neceſſary to every man's admiſſion into the kingdom of heaven.

Nicodemus came to Jeſus by night, privately, but our Lord by inſiſting upon baptiſm, expreſſed by being *born of water*, as well as of the ſpirit, declares the neceſſity of an *open profession* at all hazards, agreably to his language upon other occaſions. This makes it ſtill more probable that being *born of water* means being baptized with water, and not a natural birth.

8. This illuſtration is not very clear. The ſame word we render *ſpirit* ſignifies alſo a *wind*, and thence Jeſus might be led to explain the one by the other; and to ſay that, whenever that which he had expreſſed by being *born of the ſpirit* ſhould come to paſs, thoſe on whom it took place would be no more able to account for it than a man acted upon by a ſtrong wind, who could only feel its effects, but could not underſtand its courſe; and this being a reference to a future event,

it

it is no wonder Nicodemus could not underſtand it.

10. There is great difficulty in conceiving how our Lord could be ſurprized at Nicodemus's not underſtanding him. But he might preſume that a perſon well verſed in all the Jewiſh learning might have apprehended his meaning ſooner, eſpecially as the effects of the prophetic ſpirit are often mentioned in the Old Teſtament, and ſome of them were ſufficiently ſimilar to what was to take place on the promulgation of the goſpel.

11. Here Jeſus intimates that, whatever difficulty there might be in Nicodemus underſtanding what he ſaid, what he declared came from God, and that he had the moſt ſatisfactory evidence of it, equal to that which any man could have had of what he had ſeen and known himſelf. This phraſe, however, of *ſpeaking what we know, and teſtifying what we have ſeen*, is ſo much the language of an eye and ear witneſs, that ſome have ſuppoſed the words to be thoſe of the evangeliſt; eſpecially as John makes uſe of the ſame phraſe on other occaſions. They therefore ſuppoſe that Chriſt's addreſs to Nicodemus ends at the tenth verſe, and the Evangeliſt ſpeaks to the end of the chapter. But the phraſe *verily verily I ſay unto thee*, is ſo characteriſtic of our Saviour, that it ſeems impoſſible to admit the interpretation. We do not find this language uſed by any other perſon.

12. It is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe that the epithet *earthly* is applicable to the ſubject of our Lord's diſcourſe; becauſe the phraſe might be proverbial, denoting

ing that the truths he had to reveal were as much more ſublime than thoſe he had informed him of, as heaven is above the earth. He then proceeds to allude to ſome of thoſe doctrines, eſpecially that concerning his death, and the effects of it in the propagation of the Goſpel, of which no Jew had any apprehenſion. It was, however, our Lord's cuſtom to ſay things which could not be fully underſtood at the time of delivering them, but only when they were reflected upon afterwards.

John the Baptiſt adopts the ſame figurative expreſſion when he ſays v. 31ſt, *he that is of the earth, is earthly, &c.* meaning not that Jeſus was more from heaven than himſelf, or that his doctrine, properly ſpeaking, was more from God, which was indeed impoſſible; but that the miſſion of Jeſus had a much greater object than his, as much as heaven is above earth, an expreſſion uſed by the pſalmiſt.

13. In order to ſpeak of heavenly things, a man muſt have been in heaven; and this could not be ſaid of any perſon with ſo much propriety as of Jeſus, who having had the moſt intimate communication with God, who is always ſpoken of as being *in heaven*, may be ſaid to have been there too, and conſequently to have *come down from heaven*, nay, as it is here expreſſed to be *in heaven at preſent*, on account of the intimate preſence of God with him. And this is not to be underſtood as if no perſon had been in heaven in this ſenſe beſides Jeſus, for the phraſe is nothing more than a Hebrew mode of compariſon, according to which any thing is denied of one which is true in a higher

ſenſe

ſenſe of another. Thus when it is ſaid *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, the meaning is not that God properly hated Eſau, but that he preferred Jacob to him. What is here ſaid therefore of Jeſus being in heaven, is only figurative language, and is by no means to be underſtood literally; as if he had been actually in heaven, and came down from thence; tho', as has been obſerved, what is not at all unnatural to ſuppoſe, that during his communication with God ſubſequent to his baptiſm, he might imagine that he had actually been in heaven, and therefore had actually come down from thence. Leaſt of all are we authorized to infer from ſuch expreſſions as theſe that Jeſus had pre-exiſted, and had been in ſome other world or ſtate before he came into this. N. B. This verſe and all that follows to the end of the chapter, may be ſuppoſed to be the language of the evangeliſt, tho' I ſee no improbability in their being ſuppoſed to be the words of Jeſus himſelf.

15. Here our Lord alludes to his death upon the croſs, and the effect of faith in him, ſimilar to the effect of the faith of the Iſraelites, when they looked towards the brazen ſerpent, which Moſes expoſed to their view in the wilderneſs.

21. In this language our Lord reproves the incredulity of the Jewiſh nation in general, notwithſtanding they had had abundant evidence of his divine miſſion. At this time however, they had ſeen but few of his miracles, and therefore the obſervation will better ſuit the character of the evangeliſt who wrote a long time after all the events, unleſs we ſuppoſe this part of the hiſtory

to

to be out of its place, and that it ought to have been introduced among the events of the laſt paſſover.

THE PARAPHRASE.

John iii. 2. We cannot but acknowledge that thou art a teacher ſent with ſome commiſſion from God to inſtruct us, becauſe no perſon except one commiſſioned and empowered by God, could do theſe miracles which we ſee thou doſt; and I am come to ſhew my reſpect for thee, and to make farther enquiries concerning thy doctrine and pretenſions. 3. Jeſus anſwered, if you conſider me as a teacher ſent from God, you muſt not content yourſelf with applying to me in a private manner, but muſt make an open profeſſion of your faith by the rite of baptiſm, as you oblige your proſelytes to do when you ſay that then they are born again. 4. Nicodemus replied, to baptize Jews, the children of Abraham, and who are already the ſons of God, appears to me to be as extraordinary as a new birth to thoſe who are already full grown, and even advanced to old age. 5. Jeſus anſwered, the kingdom of God is, however, to be introduced both by the baptiſm of water, and by the ſpirit, or the miraculous effuſion of divine gifts; and every diſciple of mine, in this age of the promulgation of the goſpel, will partake of both. 6. The privileges of the goſpel are not things that a man can inherit by natural deſcent, but are of a ſpiritual nature. 7. And therefore do not wonder that it ſhould be required even of Jews, that they be converted to it, and baptized into it, juſt as Gentiles are when they become Jews; aſſuming a new and heavenly diſpoſition.

8. Do not expreſs ſo much ſurprize at my ſaying you muſt be *born of the ſpirit*, as the *wind*, tho' the nature and the cauſe of it be not underſtood by you, produces great and viſible effects; ſo ſhall it be when the ſpirit of which I ſpeak ſhall exert its power.

9, 10. Nicodemus acknowledging that he was not able to comprehend theſe things, Jeſus replies, Art thou a maſter in Iſrael, one who profeſſes a thorough knowledge of the ſcriptures, and art ſo little apprized of the nature of the *ſpirit*, by which many perſons in former times have been actuated, ſo as to become quite other perſons than they were before, and do things of which they were before incapable?

11. But not to explain at preſent how theſe things might have been underſtood from the ſcriptures, I do aſſure you, that what I now aſſert may be depended upon, as what I have received in commiſſion from God, tho' the Jews in general do not receive my doctrine as from God.

12, 13. If you heſitate to admit theſe firſt and elementary principles of the goſpel, ſuch as John the Baptiſt has already taught you, how can you receive the more ſublime truths of it, to which your prejudices are ſtill more averſe; and yet they are ſuch things as I, who am in intimate communion with the Father, have in commiſſion from him, ſome of which are the following important particulars.

14. You expect a temporal and triumphant Meſſiah, but you will have a ſuffering one, who will even be expoſed upon the croſs, as Moſes expoſed the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, and for a ſimilar ſalutary purpoſe.

15. That

15. That whoſoever, of whatever nation he be, that ſhall look up to him, or believe in him, and obey, may not periſh, but have everlaſting life. 16, 17. It was for this gracious purpoſe that God ſends him into the world, viz. that not the Jews only, as you ſuppoſe, but that the Gentiles alſo might be ſaved; whereas you expect that the Meſſiah will triumph over, trample upon, and oppreſs the Gentile world. 18. And ſuch are, and will be, the teſtimonials of my divine miſſion, that whoſoever does not admit them will be liable to juſt cenſure and condemnation. 19. For the evidence will be ſuch, as none but the wilfully blind, thoſe whoſe minds are preverted by vicious prejudices, can reſiſt. Such will naturally be averſe to the goſpel and its evidence. 20. For we ſee univerſally, that they who are conſcious of guilt are averſe to receive that truth, by which their vices would be detected and expoſed. 21. But they who are of a candid and ingenuous diſpoſition, and have nothing to reproach themſelves for, fear nothing, and are ready to receive all new truths. Their hearts and lives being worthy of God, every doctrine that is true can only make them appear to more advantage.

SEC.

SECTION XVI.

The last Testimony of John and his Imprisonment.

John III. 22.——36.

Luke III. 19.——20.

WE have here the laſt account of John's miniſtry, and his expreſs acknowledgment of the ſuperiority of Jeſus to himſelf. This is a circumſtance greatly in favour of the truth of his divine miſſion. For being in poſſeſſion of a great popularity, and conſequently within reach of the fruits of it, whatever they were, if he had been an impoſtor, he would have availed himſelf of his ſituation, and never have given place to another, who had none of the advantages he poſſeſſed; and by whoſe ſucceſs it does not appear he had any proſpect of being benefitted.

22. Except that Jeſus worked miracles, there does not appear to have been any difference between him and John as *public teachers.* The doctrine of both was the ſame, *repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;* and both of them baptized, tho' Jeſus did not do this in his own perſon, on account of its being a ſervile office which his diſciples were ready to diſcharge for him. For if we may judge from the few examples we have of the mode of adminiſtering it, both the perſon baptizing, and the perſon baptized, went into the water together; and it was not ſufficient that the perſon baptized ſhould plunge himſelf in water in the preſence of the

the other. That baptiſm was adminiſtered by immerſing the whole body in water cannot be doubted. But as all that was repreſented by it was *cleanſing from ſin*, and this is ſufficiently expreſſed by the application of water to any part of the body, I do not ſee that exactneſs in the outward ceremony is at all neceſſary in caſes in which it would be attended with inconvenience; tho' our Saviour and his Apoſtles neither finding, nor foreſeeing, any inconvenience from dipping the whole body, have left us neither precept nor example of any other practice. In Judea, where bathing for the purpoſe of purification was frequent, and the climate warm, plunging in water is generally a great gratification. The primitive chriſtians muſt have ſeen the thing in this light, when without any objection being made to it, they ſatisfied themſelves with only ſprinkling thoſe who were ſick.

25. Probably about the neceſſity of his baptiſm which repreſented purifying.

26. Had John openly announced Jeſus as the Meſſiah, it is probable this perſon would have called him by that name, and not at all that he would have expreſſed ſurprize or concern that the people ſhould flock to him. It ſhewed great attachment to his maſter that he ſhould be offended at the preference which was given to Jeſus, when John himſelf had acknowledged him to be his ſuperior.

28. The phraſe *before him* does not mean before the Chriſt or the Meſſiah, but only *before that perſon* of whom you are ſpeaking, namely before Jeſus. This is evident

in the original, tho' the contrary is intimated lation. Vide Theological Repository.

29. As John had before expreſſed his inferiority to Jeſus, by ſaying that he was not worthy to ſtoop down and untie his ſandals, he now uſes another compariſon, calling Jeſus the bridegroom, and himſelf his friend, who would rejoice in his happineſs and honours.

31. This figurative expreſſion, ſignifying that Jeſus was as much ſuperior to him as heaven is to the earth, was explained before, and ſeems to have been common with the Jews.

34. Diſtinguiſhed by a profuſion of the gifts of the ſpirit which himſelf was not.

35. This does not imply that all power was given to Jeſus at that time, but only that it would be given him. So when Jeſus ſays after his reſurrection, *All power is given me in heaven and earth*, we are only to underſtand it will be conferred upon him at his ſecond coming in his proper kingdom, which commences at the day of judgment. He is now, according to his own compariſon, gone to receive his kingdom, or be inveſted with it, and will then come to exerciſe it.

36. By believing in Chriſt, we are always to underſtand faith with its natural conſequences, repentance and obedience. However, mere unbelief when the evidences of the Goſpel are fairly propoſed, implies ſomething wrong in the ſtate of a man's mind, and therefore deſerving of cenſure.

THE

THE PARAPHRASE.

John III. 27. Do not think that I ſhall take any umbrage at the greater ſucceſs of the miniſtry of Jeſus: The rank and office of us both was fixed by God, and therefore what we muſt acquieſce in. 28. You muſt acknowledge that I never pretended to be the Meſſiah, but only to be ſent to prepare the way for the perſon at whoſe ſucceſs you take umbrage. 29. I rejoice in his honour and happineſs, as a friend, who aſſiſts at a marriage feaſt, partakes of the joy of the bridegroom. 30. 31. In compariſon with his commiſſion, mine relates to earthly things, and his to heavenly ones. 32. And though the people may not flock to him ſo readily, and ſo generally as they have done to me, his ſuperior commiſſion is as authentic as my inferior one; for he delivers only what he has ſeen and heard from God. 33. He, therefore, who believes in him, believes in God himſelf. 34. To me, and to other prophets, but a ſmall portion of the ſpirit of God is given; but to him the divine communications are without meaſure; for the Divine Being acts and ſpeaks by him in ſuch a manner as he has never thought proper to do, by any other perſon whatever. 35. Such is the love and regard that God bears to him, that he will commit to him all power both in heaven and earth. 36. He will then give him power to raiſe the dead, and to give everlaſting life to all his faithful followers; and all who obſtinately refuſe to receive and obey his goſpel will be excluded from that everlaſting life, and ſuffer the moſt exemplary puniſhment.

SECTION XVII.

The discoure of Jesus with the woman of Samaria.

John IV 1.——42. Matt. IV. 12.
Mark I. 14. 15.

THE Samaritans lived in the very centre of Judea, worſhipped the ſame God, and uſed the ſame rites with the Jews, but were inveterate enemies to them. They were in part deſcendants from the ten tribes, the greateſt part of whom were made captive by the Aſſyrians, but mixed with other diſtant nations, and ſettled in the ſame diſtrict by their conquerors. The different people for ſome time retained their different worſhip; but the country being depopulated by war, and therefore infeſted with wild beaſts, they imagined, according to the ideas which generally prevailed in the heathen world, that this was a judgment upon them for not worſhipping the God of the country in which they were ſettled. On this account one of the prieſts whom they had carried away from Samaria, came as we read 2 Kings xvii, 18. *and dwelt in Bethel and inſtructed them from the books of Moſes, which the prieſts had in their poſſeſſion.*

The temple of Jeruſalem being deſtroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the Samaritans propoſed to join with the Jews after their return from the captivity in rebuilding it; but their propoſal was rejected. Ez. Ch. iv. 1. 2, 3, and other cauſes of of diſſention ariſing, they erected a temple

temple on Mount Gerizim, performing the ſame worſhip with the Jews. They alſo continued as free from idolatry as the Jews themſelves; and we ſhall find they had the ſame expectation of the Meſſiah. Theſe Samaritans, tho' much reduced in number, ſtill ſubſiſt, and what is of unſpeakable value, they preſerve among themſelves, in the antient Hebrew character, copies of the books of Moſes, which, as they had no friendly intercourſe with the Jews ſince the Babyloniſh captivity, there can be no doubt were the ſame with thoſe in uſe before that event, tho' ſubject to ſuch variations as will always be occaſioned by frequent tranſcribing. And the variations from our preſent copies, which were thoſe of the Jews, are ſo inconſiderable that, by this means we have a proof that thoſe important books have been preſerved uncorrupted for the ſpace of almoſt three thouſand years, ſo as to leave no room to doubt that they are the ſame that Moſes actually wrote. It appears however, to the learned, that the Samaritan copies are more perfect than thoſe of the Jews, the latter having omitted many clauſes and paſſages which they thought to be ſuperfluous, but which are both agreable to antient ſimplicity, and are ſometimes neceſſary to make a perfect ſenſe. It is hoped, therefore, that in future tranſlations of the books of Moſes, thoſe additions will be inſerted in their proper places.

3. We ſee how ſenſible Jeſus was of the umbrage his preaching would give the rulers of the Jews. That they looked upon him with a jealous eye, appears by Nicodemus's coming by night. Tho' Jeſus knew it was not in the power of the rulers to defeat the pur-

poſes of God in his miſſion, he was cautious not unneceſſarily to expoſe himſelf to their reſentment; ſo that he choſe at preſent to avoid the country near Jeruſalem, and open his commiſſion, as it were, in Galilee, a part of the country, populous, but diſtant from the capital.

John iv. 9. *Have no friendly intercourse.*] The word συγχρωνται cannot mean, as in our tranſlation, *have no dealings;* for the diſciples were at that time going into the town to buy food; and paſſing, as all the people of Galilee at leaſt muſt frequently do, through Samaria, that kind of intercourſe could not be avoided. Pearce would render the word, *Use not any thing together with the Samaritans*; as that they will not drink out of the ſame cup, or out of the ſame well with them. Theſe words are probably thoſe of the evangeliſt, and not of the woman. W.

10. *Living*, or *running water.*] Jacob's well was probably a reſervoir for rain water, ſuch being common in the Eaſt. See *Obſervations on Travels into the East*, Vol. I. p. 122.

Here we have an example of the figurative and enigmatical manner of ſpeaking which Jeſus ſo frequently adopted, with no other view that we can imagine but to excite the attention of his hearers, and impreſs their memories with ſomething they might reflect upon with advantage afterwards.

11. *Thou hast nothing to draw with.*] It is uſual in eaſtern countries to take leathern buckets, and lines with them, there being no ſuch things left at the wells.

12. *His*

12. *His cattle.*] Θρεμματα imports ſervants as well as cattle.

14. The *water* was his *doctrine*, which he afterwards calls *bread that came down from heaven*, and which he ſays in John vi, 51, was himſelf.

18. *He whom thou now haſt.*] Pearce prefers the reading of σοι for σου, and would render it, *thou haſt no husband*; according to which it can only be inferred that this woman had been married to five men in ſucceſſion, and not that ſhe lived in fornication at preſent. And certainly the reſpect that was ſhewn to her by Chriſt himſelf, and by her fellow citizens, render it improbable that ſhe ſhould have been ſo infamous as our preſent copies leave room to ſuppoſe.

20. As ſoon as the woman perceived that Jeſus was a prophet, ſhe endeavoured to learn whether her nation, or the Jews, were right with reſpect to their different places of worſhip.

The Samaritans received only the books of Moſes, not having originally procured any books beſides thoſe which were ſufficient to inſtruct them in the mode of worſhipping the true God, and they would not receive any from the Jews afterwards. Now in the books of Moſes no particular place is mentioned as the centre of worſhip, but the preference ſeems there to be given to mount Gerizim, for ſeverel religious purpoſes, and one remarkable paſſage of this kind the Jews have certainly omitted in their copies of the book of Deuteronomy. For theſe reaſons, and becauſe mount Gerizim was within their territory, the Samaritans thought they were juſtified in building a temple upon it.

22. This phraſe ought not to be interpreted literally, for the Samaritans worſhipped the ſame God with the Jews. It may perhaps be ſaid to be an expreſſion of general diſapprobation, intimating only that, with reſpect to the differences between them, the Jews were right, and the Samaritans wrong.

In the former part of this converſation the woman of Samaria had diſcovered that Jeſus was a prophet, in conſequence of his having told her ſuch particulars of her own hiſtory as ſhe was perſuaded he could not by any natural means have been acquainted with. We muſt now attend to the remainder of the converſation, and ſome particulars which followed it.

25. The Samaritans, we ſee here, expected a Meſſiah as well as the Jews, and conſidered him as a great *prophet*, who would reveal the whole will of God. Whether, like the Jews, they expected him in the character of a *King*, does not appear. As the Samaritans had only the five books of Moſes, (at leaſt they are not now in poſſeſſion of any more of the Jewiſh Scriptures) it is probable they were not led aſtray by any miſconſtruction of the latter prophets, as the Jews were. Beſides, they would be leſs ready to expect ſuch a deliverer and prince as the Jews did, as the Meſſiah was to be of the houſe of David; and therefore a Jew, from whom they could not expect any favour, tho' they might hope that, as, in their opinion, their worſhip was agreable to the original deſign of Moſes, the Meſſiah might decide in their favour, notwithſtanding, both David and his ſon Solomon had worſhipped at Jeruſalem.

26. This

26. This is the firſt explicit declaration of Jeſus himſelf of his being the Meſſiah; and it is extraordinary that it ſhould be made to a woman of Samaria, and with whom he had ſo ſlight an acquaintance. It is the more extraordinary, as it is evident from ſubſequent tranſactions, that Jeſus had not acknowledged himſelf to be the Meſſiah even to the Apoſtles, but had left them, as well as the reſt of the Jews, to form their opinion of his proper character from his works, and, his conduct. This is plain from his aſking his Apoſtles what the Jews, and themſelves in particular, thought of him, and from other circumſtances to be conſidered hereafter. But the diſcovery being made to Samaritans only, it was not likely to be attended with much inconvenience by ſpreading among the Jews. It is a remarkable circumſtance that this declaration does not appear to have produced any further converſation on the ſubject, and that the woman, when ſhe told the ſtory to her countrymen, ſhould only lead them to think that Jeſus was the Meſſiah from his having told her the particulars of her private life. She does not ſay he had avowed it, nor does it appear that Jeſus made any declaration on the ſubject, tho' he preached there more than a whole day. For the people ſeem to have inferred from his diſcourſes only that he was the Meſſiah.

27. It does not appear that the diſciples overheard any part of our Lord's converſation, ſo that they muſt have learnt the particulars either from their maſter or the woman, when ſhe told the ſtory to her countrymen. But the diſciples would not be diſpoſed to credit

did her, and would hardly be likely to interrogate Jeſus upon a ſubject on which he had not thought proper to explain himſelf to them. They might, therefore, continue ignorant of his being the Meſſiah.

28. The circumſtances of this woman's leaving her water pot, or bucket, ſhews her extreme eagerneſs to inform her countrymen of what ſhe had diſcovered. Indeed, nothing could be more intereſting to them than what ſhe had to communicate. It is obſervable, however, that tho' Jeſus had aſked the woman to give him to drink, it is not ſaid that ſhe did it. Perhaps, ſeeing the arrival of the diſciples, ſhe might leave her bucket that they might uſe it themſelves, her ſervices being then unneceſſary.

32. Another example of that enigmatical way of ſpeaking ſo frequently uſed by Jeſus, and deſigned to leave a deeper impreſſion upon the memory. On this occaſion his calling the opportunity that now occurred to do the will of God by ſerving mankind as his *daily bread*, was calculated to lead his diſciples to conſider their future duty, which alſo was the inſtruction of mankind, as the proper buſineſs of their lives, as well as the procuring of food.

34. i. e. I am more ſolicitous about this than food. The only uſe of food is to prolong life, in order to diſcharge the duties of it. We do not come into the world to eat and drink, but we came into the world and eat and drink, in order to anſwer the great deſigns of providence in creating and providing for us.

35. By this time, probably, the people of the city were coming in crowds to meet Jeſus, and as he had

ſaid

ſaid that it was his meat and his drink to do the will of him that ſent him, he ſaw before him an abundant harveſt or proviſion of food of this kind, in doing the will of God, who ſent him to preach the goſpel. He ſeems to make uſe of a proverbial expreſſion, which intimated that, in general, *four months* intervened between ſeed time and harveſt, whereas he had juſt ſown his ſeed, by his converſation with the woman, and the harveſt immediately appeared, what he had ſaid having already produced a great effect.

Having ſpoken of the harveſt of God and repreſented his diſciples as the reapers, he takes this opportunity of aſſuring them, that their labours would not go unrewarded; that himſelf, who had ſowed, and they who would reap, would be happy together in the fruit of their labours.

39. It is evident that the faith of theſe people was not founded on her declaration that Jeſus had told her that he was the Meſſiah, but only that he had told her all that ſhe had done.

40. Or a part of two days, according to the Jewiſh phraſeology. He arrived preſently after noon, and probably left them after paſſing two nights in the city.

42. The Samaritans conſidered him as the Saviour of the world, tho' in what ſenſe does not appear. It is remarkable, however, that they do not ſay he would be Saviour of the Jews only, or of themſelves, but of all the world; probably applying to him the promiſe made to Abraham, that in him all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.

SEC.

SECTION. XVIII.

The Cure of the Nobleman's Son at Capernaum.

John IV. 43——54.

WE now come to the ſecond miracle wrought in Galilee, which, like the firſt, is omitted by the other evangeliſts, tho' of a very extraordinary nature, being the cure of a perſon at a great diſtance from the place where Jeſus was. But it is ſo in appearance principally, for Jeſus always aſcribed all his miracles to God, and he is every where preſent.

44. Something is probably omitted in this place, perhaps by tranſcribers; for Jeſus's own country was Galilee, and thence he is called *the Galilæan*, an appellation by which his followers went a long time, and therefore to have acted on the maxim he here mentions, he ought to have avoided all Galilæa. It was probably Nazareth, which is more expreſsly called his own country in Mark vi. that he now avoided. We may therefore ſuppoſe that the evangeliſt wrote to the following purpoſe "He departed thence and went into "Galilee, but not to Nazareth; for Jeſus himſelf teſ-"tified that a prophet has no honour in his own coun-"try." As Jeſus's occupation was a carpenter, he could not be much known beyond the town he lived in, ſo that he would be as much a ſtranger in the remoter parts of Galilee as in Judea, and conſequently might be as well received there.

45. The

45. The only miracle he wrought in Galilee before this, was turning water into wine at Cana, which was done comparatively in private, and this is not mentioned as the cauſe of his being ſo well received in Galilee, but what he had done in Jeruſalem, the particulars of which we do not know, but they muſt have been of a public nature. They were the cauſe of Nicodemus's reſorting to him, as well as of the attention now paid him on his arrival in Galilee. On this account I am more inclined to think that this part of the hiſtory is miſplaced, and that it belongs to the laſt paſſover. The alluſion to the death of Jeſus in the conference with Nicodemus, which was then at hand, and which would of courſe be more upon his mind, adds to the probability of this conjecture.

47. From this nobleman's applying to Jeſus to cure his ſon, it is probable that the miracles he had wrought at Jeruſalem were *cures*, of which moſt of his miracles conſiſted, and which were equal proofs of his benevolence, and of his divine miſſion.

It is evident he had no idea of Jeſus being able to cure his ſon without being preſent; and this is not extraordinary, as before this time probably he had not cured any except when he was preſent. There does not appear any reaſon for the reproof, which evidently it is, whether we read the ſentence poſitively or interrogatively, that Jeſus gave either to the nobleman, or to the perſons in whoſe preſence the converſation paſt. Perhaps ſomething more might have paſſed that we do not know. Perhaps he might think it reaſonable that they ſhould have received him as a prophet on the teſtimony

timony of John the Baptiſt, who, indeed, appears to have been received as ſuch without his working any miracle, merely on account of the dignity of his character and conduct, and the energy of his preaching. But there is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, no proper proof of a divine miſſion but miracles. For how can we know that the hand of God is in any thing, except we ſee ſomething done which we are perſuaded God only can do.

50. Probably this nobleman did not conſider himſelf as the object of the reproof of Jeſus. For he continued his importunity; and that there was no great principle of incredulity in him is evident from his belief when Jeſus told him that his ſon would be reſtored to health without his going. He did not indeed expreſs the ſame faith with the centurion of Capernaum, who deſired Jeſus not to trouble himſelf to go to his houſe; being ſatisfied that if he did but pronounce the word his ſervant would be cured. But the centurion had, no doubt, heard of this very caſe; whereas this perſon had not ſeen or heard any thing of the kind. No wonder, therefore, that the faith of the centurion was ſuperior.

53. The enquiry concerning the preciſe time of the recovery, was very natural and important, with reſpect to the ſhare that Jeſus had in it; and as it appeared to be at the very time when Jeſus pronounced the words, *Thy ſon liveth*, they were convinced that the cure was in conſequence of ſome power which accompanied the words.

The diſorder appears to have been *a fever*, which has a regular and well known period; ſo that when it comes

comes to its criſis, either death enſues, or there are ſigns of recovery. Now as the recovery was ſuch as to convince the family that it was not according to the courſe of nature, we may preſume that it was more complete than the uſual courſe of nature admitted, tho' no particulars are mentioned. Fevers by which perſons are brought near to death, always leave them in a very languid ſtate. However, in the accounts of many other miracles we ſhall ſee the moſt indiſputable evidence of the cures being quicker, and more compleat, than any natural recovery from diſorder, ſo that nothing is wanting in theſe inſtances to the fulleſt proof of the divine interpoſition.

SECTION XIX.

The Call of Peter, James and John.

Matt. IV. 13.——22. Mark I. 16——20.
Luke V. 1——11.

IT is ſomething remarkable that neither Matthew, Mark or Luke, ſeem to have known any thing of the preaching or miracles of Jeſus before his arrival in Galilee, after the firſt paſſover; ſo that if we had not had any other account but theirs, we ſhould have ſuppoſed that Jeſus opened his commiſſion, as it were in Galilee; and we ſhall find in the courſe of the hiſtory that Jeſus is generally conſidered as having taught in Galilee ſome time before he preached in Judea. Peter himſelf ſpeaks of the goſpel as firſt preached

ed in Galilee, Acts x, 37, *The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; That word ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached.* This however, will appear less extraordinary, if we consider that none of the disciples attended on Jesus constantly till after his arrival in Galilee; Matthew not till some time after the rest, and Mark and Luke still later; and they might not chuse to give an account of what they did not know themselves, or what was not well known to all; which the transactions before this time, comparatively speaking, were not. Even Peter was not called to attend Jesus till after his arrival in Galilee; and by carefully computing the time, I do not find that we can allow more than a week for all his preaching in Judea before he returned to Galilee, where the great scenes of this important history opened, and to these we are now to give our attention.

13. Mathew evidently considers Jesus as having lived at Nazareth till his settlement, as it may be called at Capernaum. But by *dwelling* he could only mean making it his principal residence; for according to this very evangelist, he was little in that place. Probably his mother and the rest his family might have removed thither.

15. Mr. Mede renders the original passage which is, Isaiah ix, 1, 2. as follows. "Though he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, "he shall greatly honour her by way of the sea, beyond "Jordan

"Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people that "walked in darkneſs have ſeen a great light. They "that dwell in the land of the ſhadow of death, upon "them hath the light ſhined." The prophecy was delivered at a time when this country was grievouſly harraſſed by the king of Aſſyria, juſt before the captivity of the ten tribes.

Ibid. *By the ſide of.*] The word περαν, Pearce ſhews, ſignifies ſometimes on one ſide, and ſometimes on the other ſide of Jordan; and in this place it can only mean the weſtern ſide Leigh and Vorſtius ſay it had the ſame meaning as παρα——

Ibid. *Galilee of the Gentiles.*] It was in this part of Judea that Solomon gave Hiram, king of Tyre, ſome cities, whence that country was filled with foreigners.

16. We are not to expect that all the paſſages in the Old Teſtament quoted by writers in the New, had an original reference to the purpoſe to which they applied them. It was often ſufficient for them, if the circumſtances they relate could be deſcribed in the language of ſcripture, to ſay that ſuch a paſſage was then *fulfilled*. The Jews were well converſant with the ſcriptures which were read in the Synagogue every Sabbath, and no doubt they were much read in private. For the Jews in general were able to read, and had few other books. The chriſtians, knowing that their maſter was noticed in antient prophecies, and that he was particularly diſtinguiſhed by the character of the *Meſſiah*, would probably apply to him more paſſages than had any proper reference to him. The prophecies here

quoted

quoted are in the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth chapters of Iſaiah, who is then probably ſpeaking of the deſolation of the country by the Aſſyrian invaſion, and foretelling the reſtoration of it by the victories of Hezekiah. Darkneſs means diſtreſs in general, and light happineſs. It was, however, ſufficient for the purpoſe of the evangeliſt, that ſomething favourable had been foretold concerning Galilee, and certainly ſuch was the preaching of the Goſpel in it; tho' far from being confined to it, it only began there.

17. Hence it appears that Matthew ſuppoſed Jeſus not to have preached at all, or not much, before his arrival in Galilee; and what he taught was the ſame with the preaching of John, *repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* But the Jews would not underſtand the propriety of this doctrine, for they expected nothing more than a temporal prince, who would reſcue them from the dominion of the Romans, and give them the empire of the world; and for this they already thought themſelves ſufficiently qualified.

18. It is rather extraordinary that as Peter and Andrew had been profeſſed diſciples of Jeſus in Judea, they ſhould not have attended him in his journey to Galilee, but be found following their uſual occupation when he arrived there. Probably none of the other three evangeliſts had ever heard of any former call of theſe apoſtles; and tho' in the account of John, which cannot be diſputed, they are ſaid to have been *followers of Jeſus*, they might not at that time have become his *conſtant attendants*, and might have laid aſide all thoughts of it; ſo as to require a ſecond call, like that here.

here recorded. We ſee, however, that in the account of Luke, Peter not only calls Jeſus *Maſter*, but at his command readily caſt his net, after he had deſpaired of catching any fiſh, which implies a former knowledge of him, and reſpect for him.

19. We have here an inſtance of our Lord's happy alluſion to what was paſſing in his preſence. He found theſe men catching fiſhes, and alluding to their future employment, told them that they would become *fiſhers of men*, making them converts to his religion, the moſt honourable of all employments. We muſt now attend to another account of what muſt have been the ſame tranſaction with the preceding, given by Luke, and in ſome circumſtances different, but not more ſo than what we find in the beſt hiſtorians with reſpect to things of little moment, whoſe accounts of the greater and moſt important tranſactions differ the leaſt. Such differences only prove that the hiſtorians did not write in concert, and are favourable to the credibility of their teſtimony.

Luke V. 1. I have ſometimes been inclined to think that Luke had miſplaced this account of the miraculous draught of fiſhes, ſince one ſimilar to it is related by John, as having happened after the reſurrection. That ſuch a miſtake ſhould be made by a perſon who probably was not preſent, cannot be thought extraordinary. But, on the other hand, that the ſame miracle ſhould be repeated in different circumſtances, is not improbable. At two different times Jeſus fed a great multitude with a few loaves and fiſhes, and miraculous cures of a ſimilar nature were frequently repeated.

8. *Depart from me.*] Peter thought himſelf unworthy of the preſence of ſo great and holy a prophet as he was now convinced Jeſus was, and he was afraid that ſome evil would befall him on account of his paſt ſins. This idea appears to have been familiar to the Jews. So Gideon expreſſed his fear, Judges vi, 22, becauſe he had ſeen an angel of God. Manoah, the father of Sampſon, expreſſed ſtill greater apprehenſion on the ſame account, Jud. xiii 22 So alſo the widow of Zarephath imagined that her ſon died in conſequence of her having received Elijah into her houſe, 1 Kings, xvii, 18. *And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?*

9. Tho' it is poſſible that there might be nothing miculous in this extraordinary draught of fiſhes, it is evident that Peter conſidered it in that light; and it was highly improbable that Jeſus ſhould know before hand that there would be ſuch a number of fiſhes in any particular part of the ſea, at any particular time.

11. Hence we ſee the apoſtles had ſome property. The ſhip was Simeon's own, James and John being partners, and the other ſhip was probably theirs. On another occaſion mention is made of their hiring *ſervants*, and John had probably a houſe of his own at Jeruſalem, and *being known to the high priest*, was probably a perſon of ſome diſtinction. Matthew was in public employment, and had probably acquired wealth, as it is ſaid (Luke v, 9) that he *made a great feast* in his houſe to entertain Jeſus and his diſciples. Hence it appears that the apoſtles were not needy perſons, and

and that there was ſome merit in their forſaking all and following Jeſus. Peter mentions this circumſtance, *Lo we have forſaken all and followed thee*, Mark 10th and 28th. There is, therefore, no foundation for what ſome unbelievers have ſaid, of their having much to gain, and nothing to loſe. The apoſtles, as far as we can learn, were of that claſs of men whoſe teſtimony is always deemed moſt valuable. For had they been of higher ranks in life, they would have been thought to have been too much within the influence of ambition; and it would with more probability have been ſaid, that they had ſome proſpect of aggrandizing themſelves by the ſcheme; becauſe moſt perſons who have had thoſe views have been of a pretty high rank in life. The apoſtles appear to have been honeſt men, uncorrupted by commerce with the world, and who were, from principle and conviction only, attached to Jeſus. He neither gave, nor promiſed, any thing in this world; and had they thought him to have been an impoſtor, they muſt have believed he had nothing to give them in another. Notwithſtanding this, they adhered to him through a painful and laborious life; when all proſpect of temporal advantage muſt have vaniſhed, and moſt of them died in his cauſe. Certainly the apoſtles, who lived with him, muſt have had the beſt opportunity of knowing whether he was an impoſtor or not; and the facts I have mentioned are not to be accounted for if he was.

SECTION XX.

The Cure of the Demoniac, and of Peter's wife's mother.
Matt IV. 23——25. VIII. 14——17. Mark I. 21. 38. Luke IV. 14—15——31——44. VI. 17——19.

JESUS having choſen the principal of his conſtant attendants, who were afterwards of the number of the *Apoſtles*, the great ſcenes of his public miniſtry now open upon us. It was probably on the evening before the Sabbath that Jeſus called Peter and James and John, who were his firſt diſciples, and that in their company he immediately went into Capernaum, and the day following took them with him to the ſynagogue, or place of public worſhip, where the ſcriptures were read, and prayer recited every Sabbath day.

Mark I. 21. Jeſus, tho' a ſtranger, was permitted to preach in the ſynagogues, and it appears to have been the cuſtom, that, with the conſent of the rulers of the ſynagogue, any ſtranger might do ſo; nor is this ſurprizing, for no proviſion was made for public inſtruction in the Jewiſh ſynagogues, there being no perſons who ſtudied and prepared themſelves for it; ſo that the exhortation of piousand learned ſtrangers who might occaſionally be preſent, would naturally be acceptable to them.

Matt. IV. 24. Jeſus healed all that applied to him of any diſeaſe, ſo that there could have been no colluſion. The patients were not produced by himſelf, but offered themſelves wherever he was; and they were not put off 'till another time, but were inſtantly and

completely

completely cured, whether their diſorders in the courſe of nature were curable or incurable, and ſince theſe cures were wrought before all who choſe to attend, nothing is wanting to the fulleſt proof that he was a teacher ſent from God; ſince as Nicodemus obſerved, he did ſuch things as no man could have done if God had not been with him.

Ch. VIII. 17. The manner in which Matthew applies this prophecy, ſhews in what ſenſe he underſtood Chriſt's being ſaid to *bear the ſins of men*, viz. bearing or *taking them away*, and not taking them on himſelf, and thereby becoming liable to puniſhment for them. For certainly he did not take the bodily infirmities or diſeaſes of men upon himſelf, but removed them by his power. So likewiſe he removes the moral diſorders of men, the diſeaſes or vices of the mind, by the power of his goſpel.

22. Probably the Scribes did little more than explain the ceremonial of the law of Moſes, and teach the people nice diſtinctions, and ritual obſervances, or inform them of the traditions of the elders; ſo that one who reproved vice in the manner of the antient prophets, ſuch as John the Baptiſt and Jeſus, would be a great phenomenon, and certainly Jeſus taught morality with an air of greater authority than any who preceded him.

23. The diſorder with which this man was afflicted was probably the epilepſy.

It was the opinion of the Jews, as it is to this day in all countries of the Eaſt, that inſanity is produced by the agency of evil ſpirits, who go into men, and diſor-

der their underſtandings; and conſequently that there can be no cure till the evil ſpirit is caſt out. Hence they had recourſe to a variety of modes of exorciſm, or charms, to compel thoſe evil ſpirits, whom they called dæmons, to go out of man.

24. What I have obſerved being the opinion of all the country, it is not extraordinary that many inſane perſons ſhould imagine themſelves to be poſſeſſed, and ſpeak and act in the name of the dæmons whom they thought to be within them. For there are all degrees of inſanity, and many who are moſt inſane have lucid intervals, in which they converſe rationally, and receive information from thoſe about them. This Demoniac had heard of Jeſus, and, attending the ſynagogue, had no doubt heard him preach, and his being permitted to be there (for he was not brought with a view to be cured) is a proof that he was not very mad. He, ſpeaking in his own name, or that of the Dæmon within him (for what he ſays will apply to either) and conceiving Jeſus to be a holy perſon, or prophet, perhaps the Meſſiah, for it was ſoon ſuſpected, we ſee, that he might be ſo, expreſſed his apprehenſion that he might be come to do him ſome injury. For ſuch were the apprehenſions of the Jews in general when they ſuppoſed themſelves to be in the preſence of an angel, or any very holy perſon.

26. We ſee how the natural actions of the man were aſcribed to the ſpirit within him. He was evidently much convulſed, and cried out; and this was, no doubt, the cry of the man himſelf, being produced by the action of his own organs of ſpeech; and yet, if the expreſſion

preſſion be literally interpreted, it would imply that it was the Dæmon that uttered the cry.

27. We cannot wonder that ſo much aſtoniſhment was expreſſed by the ſpectators, when we conſider that, tho' many miracles had been recorded in the ſacred books of the Jews, none had been exhibited for more than four hundred years before. The people were aſtoniſhed at the doctrine and authority with which he taught, as well as the miracle. *What thing is this? What new doctrine is this?* Not that Jeſus taught any thing properly new, but there was a novelty and energy in his manner of teaching to which they had not been accuſtomed.

Of all the diſorders to which we are liable there is none we know ſo little of, and in which medicine gives leſs certain relief, than inſanity. In theſe caſes, when, by any mode of treatment, men *do* recover the uſe of their ſenſes, it is generally after a long time. But here this moſt wonderful of all effects was produced by ſpeaking a word, an evident proof that the hand of God was in it.

31. This diſorder has a regular period, and is not cured without coming to a criſis, ſo that a ſudden cure, like this, immediately after which a perſon ſhall be able to go about his buſineſs, is evidently miraculous.

34. i. e. Dæmoniacs.

35. Notwithſtanding Jeſus performed theſe extraordinary miracles, we ſee how he expreſſed his intire dependance upon God, for all his powers by prayer, as other pious perſons do.

SEC-

SECTION XXI.

The Sermon on the Mount. PART I.

Matt. V, 1 ——16. Mark IV. 21, 22. IX, 49, 50. Luke VI, 20.——26. VIII. 16, 17. XI, 33. XII, 58, 59. XIV. 34, 35. XVI, 17.

HITHERTO it is only ſaid that Jeſus like Johh the Baptiſt called upon his hearers to *repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand.* Here we have a ſpecimen of his excellent morality.

The great object of this diſcourſe ſeems to have been to inculcate the principles of a better morality than was taught by the doctors of the Jewiſh law in that age, and alſo gradually to undermine ſome of their notions concerning the outward ſplendour of the Meſſiah's kingdom. For, in oppoſition to the pride and haughtineſs which thoſe notions could not fail to inſpire, he begins his diſcourſe with pronouncing bleſſings upon perſons of a quite different temper and diſpoſition, as the *poor in ſpirit*, as the *humble*, the *mourners*, the *meek*, the *merciful*, &c. and eſpecially the *perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake*, of which they who expected a triumphant Meſſiah could have no apprehenſion.

Matt. V. 3. No virtue is more frequently inſiſted upon by the ſacred writers, and our Lord in particular, than humility, which is no doubt the meaning of *poverty of ſpirit*; and pride is generally conſidered, eſpecially by

by the pſalmiſt, as ſynonymous to vice in general. The former is that temper of mind which receives all the commandments of God with ſubmiſſion, and acquieſces with cheerfulneſs in all his diſpenſations; whereas a ſpirit of pride and haughtineſs ſets a man up as it were againſt God, leading him to deſpiſe all ſuperior authority, and to affect ſomething of ſelf-ſufficiency and independence. It is obſerved that not leſs than ten times in the courſe of the New Teſtament we meet with the ſentiment expreſſed by our Saviour, Matthew xxiii, 11, viz. *Whoſoever humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.*

4. This denotes the ſame general character with poverty of ſpirit. The poor in ſpirit will lament their own ſins, and thoſe of others, and be apprehenſive of the divine diſpleaſure, which is their only dread.

5. This expreſſion frequently occurs in the book of Pſalms, in which long life and the inherritance of the earth are repreſented as the rewards of all virtue; and they may ſtill expreſs the happineſs of a future ſtate, which will probably be upon this earth, in ſome reformed and improved ſtate of it after the reſurrection.

6. This is a very emphatical expreſſion, intimating that the truly virtuous have the ſame ardent deſire to excell in all virtue, that other men have to gratify their natural appetites for meat and drink; and that to do a wrong action would give them as much pain as hunger, or thirſt.

7. This is what Jeſus frequently, and with peculiar emphaſis, inculcates. It is even the ſubject of one of the petitions in the prayer which he gave his diſciples, which teaches us to expect no mercy from God, but in

earth

proportion as we extend mercy to our offending and penitent brethren.

8. It appears to have been too much the cuſtom with the Jewiſh moraliſts, to inculcate a regard to external actions, but here, and in ſeveral other parts of his diſcourſe, Jeſus ſhews the importance of attending in the firſt place to the heart, from which all that is morally good or bad proceeds; the heart, or the affections, being the root of the tree, and our actions the branches and the fruit, which always derive their quality from it.

9. This is ſimilar to the virtues before mentioned, of humility, meekneſs, and mercifulneſs. They who are of this diſpoſition will always be diſpoſed to be at peace with all the world, and will rejoice in every opportunity of promoting peace and good will among others.

12. This language muſt have greatly ſurprized thoſe followers of Jeſus, who had any expectation of his being the Meſſiah. For they little looked for a ſtate of perſecution, and could therefore ſee no occaſion for ſuch an exhortation as this. But nothing could have been better caculated to prepare men for that ſtate which would beſt qualify them for the happineſs of chriſtians in a future world, viz. a ſtate of ſevere trial and diſcipline in this world, in which it would often be neceſſary to abandon life, and all the enjoyments of it, in order to ſecure an intereſt in the happineſs of heaven, of which Jeſus more diſtinctly apprized his followers afterwards.

13. *If the ſalt have loſt its ſavour.*] It is a common thing

thing for rock ſalt, when expoſed to the air, in hot countries, to loſe its acid. Maundrel ſays, "Along "one ſide of the valley of ſalt, viz. that towards Gibul, "there is a ſmall precipice, about two men's length, "occaſioned by the taking away of the ſalt. I broke a "piece off that was expoſed to the ſun, rain, and air; "though it had the ſparks and particles of ſalt, yet it "had perfectly loſt its ſavour. The inner part, which "was connected to the rock, retained its ſavour, as I "found by proof." *Benson's Life of Christ*, p. 391.

14. *A city set on an hill.*] Perhaps the town of Japhet, or Bethulia, which ſtood upon a hill, might be in view.

16. Theſe two exhortations are immediately addreſſed to his profeſſed diſciples, and eſpecially thoſe who propagated the goſpel. Of theſe he ſays, ye are the ſalt of the earth, and the light of the world, and therefore of no uſe if they do not act up to their proper character, ſo as to be of uſe to others. Similar to this in the antient prophets is the compariſon of Iſrael to a vine, which if fruitleſs is of no value at all, the quantity and quality of its wood being both inſignificant. And certainly nothing can be more contemptible than the character of thoſe who profeſs to teach chriſtianity to others, and diſgrace it by their own conduct. Such men as Jeſus intimates by his next compariſon, ſtand in a conſpicuous ſituation, where their conduct will be obſerved, and cannot be without a good or bad effect; ſo that they ought to be more particularly circumſpect.

By the compariſon of chriſtian miniſters to the light of

of the world, Jeſus reproves thoſe who are qualified to be uſeful to others, and yet do not exert themſelves for that purpoſe. No man ſhould *live to himſelf*, but leaſt of all thoſe, who by their education and profeſſion, make it their buſineſs to inſtruct others. They ſhould conſider themſelves as devoted to God, and to the cauſe of truth and virtue, and not hold themſelves excuſed if they do not, by every method in their power, enlighten the minds and improve the hearts of all to whom they have acceſs. When men are incapacitated for public uſefulneſs, the obligation, no doubt, ceaſes. Then, as Milton finely ſays, *They alſo ſerve who only ſtand and wait*; being ready to be ſent upon any buſineſs of their maſter whenever they are called upon.

17. We are probably to regard what we find in theſe three chapters not as delivered at once, but as the ſubſtance of what Jeſus ſaid upon various occaſions. The want of connection ſhews this. The evangeliſt has given no account of his general moral maxims but this, and he preached in various places in Galilee, and would probably often repeat the ſame thing. So in the tenth chapter we have an account of Chriſt's inſtruction to the twelve apoſtles with reſpect to their particular miſſion before his death; but into that diſcourſe he brought every thing of a ſimilar nature, even precepts which relate to their future miſſion into the world at large, which were probably not delivered at that time. This might be conſidered as more convenient for the reader, than to place ſimilar obſervations in different parts.

18. It does not appear that our Lord had as yet done

any

any thing that can be interpreted as an inf
regard to the laws of Moſes, or an intentic
them. But his invectives againſt the tea
law, and the liberties he took with the Sabbath after
wards, made it ſuſpected. Indeed, the cures at Caper-
naum were upon the Sabbath day. But it does not ap-
pear that this then gave any offence. It was ſometime
afterwards that the more zealous doctors of Jeruſalem
made a handle of this. The common people do not
appear to have been offended at it. Our Lord, howe-
ver, might chuſe to advance what he ſays concerning
the law, previous to what he was about to ſay with reſ-
pect to the Scribes and Phariſees, who were the great
teachers of it. As the Jews expected that the Meſſiah
would be a great prophet as well as a king, ſuch as Da-
vid had been, they muſt naturally expect that he would
teach them ſomething, as well as deliver them from
their enemies; and therefore might wiſh to know how
far his commiſſion in this reſpect extended. Jeſus muſt
know that many ſuſpected he was the Meſſiah, and tho'
he did not acknowledge, he did not contradict it. But
whatever his ſpecific character was, he diſtinctly and
frequently informed his hearers of the great object of
his miſſion, and here he ſays, *I am not come to deſtroy
the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them*, i. e. com-
pletely to conform to them, and enforce their obligati-
on. This he did by his own conduct, and the apoſtles
did ſo after his death; attending the temple ſervice,
and doing every thing elſe that other religious Jews
held themſelves obliged to do, tho' they did not enjoin
the ſame obſervances on their gentile converts. The
only

only objection that has been made to the opinion of the laws of Moſes being perpetually obligatory on the Jews, tho' they ſhould embrace chriſtianity, has been occaſioned by what was advanced by Paul in ſome of his epiſtles, and theſe will be conſidered in their proper place.

One tittle;] Probably thoſe ſmall ſtrokes which made the diſtinction between letters nearly alike.

19. It appears that the Jewiſh teachers made great account of their diſtinction of the precepts of the law into *greater* and *leſs*, thoſe of the *firſt and ſecond importance*, &c. Here Jeſus ſays every thing that God enjoins us is of importance, and that all infringement of the ſmalleſt article will affect a man's rank in the kingdom of heaven; whereas the conſcientious obſervance of the ſmalleſt, when the reſt are not neglected, gives high rank in it.

20. Hence it is highly probable that the Scribes and Phariſees taught that the obſervance of ſome precepts would atone for the neglect of others. Otherwiſe what Jeſus ſays would be no reaſon for what he advanced about obſerving all commands without diſtinction. The ſame may be inferred from what James ſaid, *he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all.* Jeſus now proceeds to particular inſtances of the imperfection of the morality of the Scribes and Phariſees.

21. *In danger of the judgment.*] *Judgment* and *council* probably refer to different courts of judicature among the Jews.

22. *Hell fire.*] The word γεεννα ſignifies the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, which was a valley near Jeruſalem,

lem, infamous for idolatry, and particularly for the burning of infants to Molock, fires being continually kept there for that and other purpoſes. After the reign of Joſiah, the filth of the city was generally conſumed there. By the name of this horrid place the Jews, in our Saviour's time, repreſented the puniſhment of the wicked in another life, and he adopted it after them. See *Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. II. p. 141.

As *Raka*, in the former part of the verſe, is a Hebrew or Syriac word, it is probable that the word μωρε is one too, and then it will ſignify *rebel or apoſtate*, which is a more bitter and inſulting expreſſion than *fool*. *Raka* means an empty good for nothing fellow.

Probably the Jews thought that only greater offences, ſuch as they thought worthy of being puniſhed by courts of juſtice, the leſſer of which they called *the judgment*, and the greater *the council*, were offenſive to God. But Jeſus makes the ſmalleſt offence in the eye of God to be equal to thoſe which they thought deſerving the higheſt cenſure. Obſerve, it is not particular expreſſions that we are to attend to, ſo much as the general ſpirit and deſign of what our Lord ſays. The purport of what he ſays here is, that offences which men often overlook, as of little conſequence, are frequently in reality of great; being either in themſelves highly criminal, or leading to what is ſo.

24. This is not to be underſtood quite literally, but conſidered as an emphatic manner of expreſſing the great importance of mora duties, eſpecially thoſe of a ſocial kind.

26 This

26. This ſeems to be a precept of prudence, but ſhews in general the danger of neglecting whatever ought to be done and how much evil a little attention may prevent.

Mark IX. 49. Salted for the fire. Thus πυρι may be rendered i. e. every perſon ſhall be prepared for being a ſacrifice to God by you the apoſtles and diſciples. So 2 Pet. iii, 7. πυρι τηρουμενοι is reſerved for fire. Benſon's life of Chriſt. Pearce thinks the clauſe to be an interpolation. There is an ambiguity in the Hebrew and Syriac word which Jeſus probably, uſed as it ſignifies either to be conſumed or to be ſalted.

50. *Have ſalt in yourſelves.*] i. e. Have the true ſpirit of the goſpel among yourſelves, and give proof of it by living in peace one with another, of which partaking of the ſame ſalt is an emblem. *Ibid.* p. 712.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew V. 22. Your ordinary tribunals in this world puniſh murder only with death; but I ſay unto you, that, in a future world, cauſeleſs rage and hatred will be puniſhed by God, who knows the heart, in a manner as dreadful. If the hatred proceed to abuſive words, ſo that a man ſhall call his brother a *vain empty fellow*, his puniſhment will be as much greater, as that which is inflicted by the Sanhedrim for the moſt atrocious crimes exceeds the puniſhments that are inflicted by the inferior courts of juſtice. But if a man proceeds farther to call his brother *a wicked abandoned wretch*, which reflects upon his moral character as well as his underſtanding, and all without reaſon, his puniſhment

in

in a future life will be ſo great, that it may be compared to burning in the valley of Hinnom, which is more dreadful than any puniſhment that the higheſt of your judicatures ever inflict. See Grotius.

SECTION XXII.

The Sermon on the Mount. PART II.

Matt. V. 27——48. Luke VI. 27——36.

IN this part of the diſcourſe Jeſus continues to inculcate the ſame maxims of ſtrict morality which he had laid down in the former, giving more inſtances of the ſtreſs that ought to be laid on purity of heart, as well as on freedom from blame in the outward actions.

28. As we ought not to indulge unreaſonable anger which leads to murder, ſo neither ought we to indulge paſſions which lead to the violation of any other of God's commands. For if the deſign of committing any action be actually formed, and nothing but opportunity be wanting to putting it in practice, it is the ſame thing in the ſight of God who ſees and judges by the heart, as if it had been done. Hence no doubt perſons will be rewarded for virtuous actions which they never performed, if it was their deſire and determination to perform them, as others will be puniſhed for vices which they never actually committed.

But in this caſe it is not the mere thought of any crime, or the mere deſire of criminal gratification ſuch

as would not carry a man to the actual doing wrong that are here cenſured. For ſuch mere thoughts and deſires are often unavoidable, and ſhould be conſidered as temptations which there is virtue in reſiſting. But the voluntary indulgence of ſuch thoughts and deſires is in itſelf conſiderably criminal, as they may lead to that ſtate of mind which would carry a man to outward action. They ought therefore to be reſiſted with the greateſt care.

29. *Offend*, i. e, *ensnare, cause to sin.*] This is generally the meaning of the word σκανδαλιζω in the New Teſtament.

Ib. *Thy whole body be cast into hell.*] It is plain that our Lord alludes to the reſurrection, as the time of future puniſhment, without giving any hint of an *intermediate state*, or the puniſhment of the ſeparate ſoul, concerning which nothing is ever ſaid in the ſcriptures.

30. It is evident that through almoſt the whole of this diſcourſe, Jeſus expreſſed himſelf in a parabolical and figurative manner, and did not intend to be underſtood literally. What he ſays of cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye, which are members of the greateſt value to us, if they cannot be retained without incurring guilt, expreſſes in the ſtrongeſt manner that every thing is to be ſacrificed to our integrity.

31. *Whosoever shall put away his wife.*] The Jewiſh doctors allowed great licence in this reſpect. R. Akiba ſaid, that if any man ſaw a woman handſomer than his own wife he might put her away, becauſe it is ſaid in the law, *If she find not favour in his eyes. Lightfoot's Work's*, Vol. II. p. 147.

23. Fre-

32. Frequency of divorce has always been conſidered as a ſymptom of great depravity of manners. It was ſo at Rome in the time of Auguſtus, and with the Jews in the time of our Saviour and that of Joſephus. It was highly neceſſary therefore in order to enforce the obligation of marriage, to reſtrict the power of divorce within the narroweſt bounds. Adultery in either party being a breach of the law of marriage, will no doubt authorize a divorce in the ſight of God, becauſe after an offence of this nature there cannot be any proſpect of domeſtic happineſs, nor any certainty with reſpect to the common offspring. So great is the evil ariſing from this crime that in moſt countries it is puniſhable with death, and juſtly ſo, tho' for obvious reaſons it has always been deemed a greater crime in the wife than in the huſband.

37. Not oaths in a court of judicature, but only in converſation. This is evident from the nature of them. It never was the cuſtom in any court to ſwear by heaven or by earth, &c. Beſides, Jeſus himſelf anſwered upon oath according to the Jewiſh mode of adminiſtering it, when he was tried before the High prieſt, who adjured him by the living God, Matt. xxvi, 63. But the Jews had made many nice diſtinctions in oaths, the abſurdity of which Jeſus expoſes, and obſerves that oaths in converſation are profane, as an infringement of that reverence which is due to God, and therefore ought to be avoided, and the greateſt ſimplicity of diſcourſe adhered to.

39. *Reſist not evil*] That this is not to be underſtood literally, is evident from the conduct of our Savi-

our and Paul, who when they were actually ſmitten, did not voluntarily expoſe themſelves to farther inſults, but expoſtulated on account of thoſe they had received. The precept can, therefore, only be intended to inculcate a meek and unrevengeful temper.

42. In all theſe caſes it is not the ſpecific action that is obligatory upon us. For that would lead to no good, and often to much harm, but the temper of mind which in its exceſs might lead to ſuch conduct as this, as giving to all who ſhould aſk, and lending to all who would borrow.

43. Theſe words are not found in the Old Teſtament, and therefore Pearce conjectures that Matthew wrote, *and not hate thine enemy*, referring to Lev. xix 17, 18; this is generally the ſenſe of the law of Moſes reſpecting ſtrangers and enemies; and our Saviour's alteration from *not hating*, to *loving*, is conſiderable. The averſion which the Jews entertained for all who were not of their own nation, or religion, is well known; but tho'they pretended to juſtify this by ſome paſſage in their law their conſtructions were unfair and injurious.

47. Tho' we are here required to love all without diſtinction, we are not required to forgive all that offend unleſs they repent, Luke xvii, 3. If he repent forgive him. But we are to love or wiſh well to all, whether they repent or not, i. e. we muſt not bear them any ill will, but from a ſincere deſire to do them good, endeavour to bring them to repentance, that we may forgive them, and behave to them as if they had never offended.

48. There is great wiſdom and ſublimity in this precept not to propoſe to ourſelves any ſtandard ſhort of abſolute perfection. If we did, ſuch is the vanity and ſelf conceit of many, that they would ſoon imagine that they had attained it. A man who really aims at perfection of character and conduct, will always ſee ſomething to improve, even where thoſe who are beſt acquainted with him, cannot ſee any fault at all. When any man pretends to perfection, it is a ſure ſign that he is far ſhort of it.

Luke VI. 35. *Hoping for nothing again.*] Pearce would render the paſſage, *making nobody deſpair*, or *putting nobody out of hopes, refuſing nobody*; preferring the reading of μηδενα to that of μεδεν. According to our preſent reading, it may be rendered *deſpairing of nothing*.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Matthew V. 38, &c. Moſes, to deter people from injuring one another, allowed men to exact by law an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, &c. And the Jewiſh doctors not only encourage men to inſiſt upon this, but even allow men to revenge their own quarrels in this manner, provided they do not inflict a greater injury than they had received. But I command you to check the ſpirit of revenge, and reſent no injury done to yourſelves, without the moſt urgent neceſſity, or for the public good. 48. Alſo, in oppoſition to the covetous, and conſequently the litigious ſpirit of the Phariſees, I would adviſe you to ſuffer as far as poſſible, and

by any means compoſe your differences, in an amicable manner, rather than go to law with one another.

SECTION XXIII.

The Sermon on the Mount. PART III.

Matt. VI. 1——33. Luke XI. 1——4. 34——36. XII. 22——34. Luke XVI, 13.

I HAVE obſerved that the great object of this diſcourſe is to inculcate the ſuperior importance of attending to the heart, and to God who ſees the heart; and that the religion which appears to others, is only the fruit, or the effect of it, and therefore of ſecondary conſideration. This is urged in this part of the diſcourſe, with as much force as in any other.

Matt. VI. 1. Our Saviour, in the beginning of this ſection, alludes to a variety of cuſtoms among the Phariſees, who performed their devotions in a very oſtentatious manner.

Upon another occaſion our Lord is far from diſapproving a decent appearance of religion. On the contrary he ſays *let your light ſhine before men.* Without this there could be no ſuch thing as good example. vide Matt. v, 16. But applauſe ſhould not be our object. In this verſe, according to the moſt approved readings, he ſpeaks firſt of *righteousness* in general, and then of *alms giving* in particular.

2. *Sound a trumpet.*] In the Eaſt, ſome Dervises carry

carry horns with them, which they blow when any thing is given them. Perhaps ſome of the Jewiſh beggars might have the ſame cuſtom, and the Phariſees might give alms to them in preference to others. *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. I, p. 474.

3. *Let not thy left hand know*, &c.] It is ſaid that the poor's cheſt ſtood on the right hand as they entered the ſynagogues.

4. In many caſes it is impoſſible to obſerve ſecrecy even in alms giving; but certainly much good may be done without the giver being known to any, even to the perſon who receives the benefit. The proper rule, no doubt, is to give alms, or do any good action, ſo as, all circumſtances conſidered, to do the moſt good, both to the object and to others, in exciting a ſpirit of benevolence.

6. *In ſecret to thy Father*, &c.] This makes a better ſenſe, and is of ſufficient authority. See *Pearce*.

Such oſtentatious prayers hardly appear credible to us; but in the Eaſt, and other countries, nothing is more common. Their religion appears in their common diſcourſe; and when the hour of prayer is come, many perſons will fall upon their knees wherever they are, even in the ſtreets. In Roman Catholic countries it is the cuſtom to pray before images in the high ways, and in places of the greateſt concourſe, as I have ſeen myſelf. Where it is the general cuſtom, even *this* may be done without affectation. It would be well if we were not ſo far gone into the other extreme. When perſons who are really pious ne-

ver diſcover that they are ſo, neither in diſcourſe, nor any particular cuſtoms, even in their own families, others who pretend to no religion will naturally claſs them with themſelves, and the benefit of their example be loſt. This extreme, however, is better than the other, which carries the appearance of hypocriſy, and makes religion diſguſting.

7. *Vain repetitions.*] This may refer to the repeated invocations which are cuſtomary in prayers to the heathen gods, in which all their known names and attributes are ſuperſtitiouſly enumerated, as well as to the clamorous indecent manner of urging their requeſts. See the account of the behaviour of the prieſts of Baal in their conteſt with Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 26.

Ibid. *As the heathen do.*] Dr. Wotton, as Pearce obſerves, thinks that the original reading was hypocrites, and not heathens. He alſo alſo thinks that βατ]ολογια in this verſe ſignifies *long ſpeeches*, and not properly vain repetitions, though theſe are the conſequence of long ſpeeches.

8. There is much difficulty in the phraſe *use not vain repetitions.* But this verſe may ſerve to explain it. If the avoiding theſe repetitions is to pray in ſuch a manner as to take it for granted that God knows our wants before we mention them, theſe repetitions muſt be ſomething in the conduct of the heathens which diſcovered that they thought differently of the objects of their worſhip, and particularly that they hoped by clamorous importunity to obtain what they otherwiſe would not be diſpoſed to grant. We may obſerve, therefore, that the very title by which our Lord directs

and

us to addreſs God is ſuch as, of itſelf, implies his diſpoſition to give us whatever is good for us, namely *our father*, as the next clauſe, *who art in heaven*, may imply that he ſees and knows all things.

9. It is evident from theſe words that Jeſus did not mean to preſcribe a particular form, to be uſed juſt as he delivered it, tho' there is no impropriety in making uſe of it, as it contains the ſubſtance, of all our prayer; but rather to ſhow in what manner we ſhould pray, what things we ſhould make the ſubjects of our prayer, the temper of mind with which we ſhould pray, both reſpecting God and man, and eſpecially the confidence we ought to expreſs in the power wiſdom and goodneſs of God, and our entire ſubmiſſion to his will.

11. The expreſſion in the original properly means *bread for the following day*, and is probably an alluſion to the cuſtom of *diſtributing to domeſtics* of a family in the evening proviſion neceſſary for the following day. It teaches us we ſhould not diſtreſs our minds with anxious thoughts about things at a great diſtance, but content ourſelves with aſking of God ſuch things as we immediately want, and thoſe *neceſſaries* only, which are ſignified by the term *bread*, without which we could not ſubſiſt.

13. This concluſion of the prayer is not in Luke, and as it is not quoted by any antient writer, it is by many perſons thought to be an interpolation. But the expreſſion, no doubt, is very proper, and ſuits very well with what precedes.

15. It is evident from this remark of Jeſus, that one of his principal objects in delivering this form was to inculcate

inculcate the temper proper for prayer, and eſpecially towards our offending brethren, thoſe who ſtand in the ſame relation to us that we ſtand in to God. Whatever we wiſh and pray he would do for us, we ſhould do for them.

16. Our Lord continues to urge the importance of *ſincerity*, in oppoſition to the *hypocriſy* of the Scribes and Phariſees. Their object was to gain the favour of men, whereas a truly devout perſon reſpects God, and what is right in itſelf, without regard to conſequences.

This was cuſtomary with the Jews, both at feaſts, and at other times.

18. This is not to be obſerved with two much rigour, any more than other precepts contained in this diſcourſe. To exhibit the appearance of feſtivity, as is the anointing the head in the Eaſt, on a day of profeſſed faſting, would be unnatural, and offenſive. But it requires that we ſhould conſult outward appearances no farther than decency requires, that nothing of this kind may particularly attract the attention of others, but take care that the ſentiments of our hearts are fit for the divine inſpection.

19. *Treaſures.*] i. e. your chief treaſures, thoſe which you moſt value, and labour moſt to attain.

Ibid. *Moth and ruſt.* Ruſt repects metals, and moth clothes, which makes a great part of valuable treaſure in Eaſtern countries, where their looſe garments will fit almoſt any perſon.

21. Beſides that theſe precepts ought not to be underſtood literally, the moſt obvious ſenſe of our Lords words

words to *us* is very different from what it would be to a Jew. For by this mode of expreſſion he would only underſtand them to mean that the laying up a treaſure in heaven is of infinitely more moment than any treaſure on earth. This was explained before. This precept if properly underſtood is of great conſequence to all chriſtians, and what in time of peace and proſperity they are very apt to loſe ſight of. The world has too many charms for us, and in the purſuit of earthly things, we are apt to forget our intereſt in heaven; ſo that when perſecution ariſes, we have no ſentiments or reſolutions, proper for the occaſion. We might then be found to love the world too much, and for the ſake of it make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience.

22. *If thine eye be ſingle*; rather, *clear*,] being oppoſed to an eye that has a film over it. Eye here means the moral principle, or conſcience, which if it be found, is the ſafe guide of life, as a lamp is to a man in walking. But if it be vitiated, a man is left without reſource, being deſerted by all that within him, which he could depend upon for direction.

24. *Mammon*.] A Syriac word for *riches*.

25. The word that is here rendered *life* is the ſame that is ſometimes rendered *ſoul*, which ſhows how cautious we ſhould be in drawing conſequences from particular words and phraſes in the ſcriptures. For it might have been rendered *take no thought for your ſoul*. But in the Scriptures the ſoul of man is no other than the *principle of life*, or a living man, in oppoſition to one that is dead, and never means a principle that

that can ſubſiſt in a ſtate of action and enjoyment when the body is dead. This is a doctrine altogether unknown to the writers both of the Old and New Teſtament, and was borrowed from the heathen philoſophy.

27. *Your age.*] Reſpecting the prolongation of life.

30. *To-morrow is cast into the oven.*] The ſtalks of herbs and flowers are uſed in the Eaſt for firing; fewel being, in many places, very ſcarce. *To-morrow* may mean *In a very short time.* See *Harmers Observations*, Vol. I. p. 264.

33. This language interpreted literally from the Greek means only *anxious care*, ſuch as tends to diſtreſs without doing any good. We ſhould make it our firſt care to do right, and to pleaſe God, conſidering him as our ſovereign, and ourſelves as his ſervants, which is intimated by our ſeeking the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs. We ſhould purſue every thing elſe with a ſecondary concern; aſſuring ourſelves, that if we make ourſelves acceptable to God, he will not ſuffer us to want any good thing. Poſſibly our Lord's advice might particularly reſpect the apoſtles, and be more literally applicable to them, and the firſt miniſters of the goſpel, who devoted themſelves wholly to the preaching of it, without any other means of ſupport. But even in this caſe we ſee that Paul had recourſe to his trade of tent making, and did not neglect a prudent care of himſelf.

All theſe precepts are admirably calculated to promote our Lord's great deſign, namely to lead men's views to another life, which had not been the caſe even

with

with Moſes and the Prophets in the Old Teſtament. Tho' I have no doubt they were believers in the doctrine of a future life, yet it does not appear from their writings that they gave much attention to it, but dwelt more on the promiſes of God in this world. The great object of Chriſt's miſſion was to *bring life and immortality to light*, and therefore his moral precepts chiefly relate to a more glorious ſtate, and this circumſtance gives a dignity and importance to the precepts of morality, which they never had before.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew VI. 9, &c. O God, our heavenly Father, the author of our being, who knoweſt all our wants, and whoſe care and goodneſs we daily experience. It is our earneſt wiſh and prayer, that thy being, attributes, and providence may be univerſally known, and reverenced; and that the pure worſhip of thee may prevail over the whole world. May thy kingdom under the Meſſiah, a kingdom of truth and righteouſneſs, be firmly eſtabliſhed; that thy will may be done by all men, with the utmoſt chearfulneſs and readineſs, as it is done by the angels in heaven. Grant unto us as much of the good things of this life as may be ſufficient for our preſent uſe; but for this and all our future ſupplies we chearfully rely on thy infinite wiſdom and goodneſs. Forgive, we beſeech thee, our offences againſt thee, as we from our hearts forgive thoſe who offend us. Bring us into no trials or temptations that ſhall be too hard for us; but may all the diſcipline of life be ſuch as ſhall exerciſe and improve us, and be a means

means of delivering us from all vice, and eſtabliſhing us in the practice of virtue. Theſe our requeſts we addreſs unto thee, as the ſupreme and perpetual governor of the univerſe, who canſt do more for us than we can aſk.

Matt. VI. 22. See that you form a right judgment of the reſpective value of things, temporal and eternal. For the judgment or reaſon is to the mind what the eye is to the body, which guides all its motions. If the eye be clear, the whole body enjoys the benefit of it; but if it be cloudy, the injury extends to the whole body. If therefore, the eye of the mind, the ſeat of knowledge and judgment, be perverted, whence can it poſſibly be enlightened and directed? In what darkneſs, confuſion and miſery, muſt the man be involved?

24. What you chiefly value and purſue muſt be *one thing*. Leaſt of all is it poſſible that any perſon ſhould ſucceſsfully give his attention to things ſo very different in their nature as thoſe of *this life*, and thoſe of the *life to come*. You muſt, therefore, give a decided preference to one of them, and make the other ſubſervient to it. This will neceſſarily be the caſe, if a man engage in the ſervice of two maſters, whoſe commands muſt ſometimes interfere. You cannot, therefore, be devoted to the ſervice of God, and the purſuit of this world at the ſame time.

SEC-

SECTION XXIV.

The Sermon on the Mount. PART IV.

Matt. VII. 1.——29. Mark IV. 23, 24. Luke VI. 31—37.——49. 31. XI. 5.——13. XIII. 23——30.

THIS diſcourſe is not confined to one ſubject, but takes in the whole compaſs of moral duty, thoſe that relate to our fellow creatures, as well as thoſe which reſpect God, and others that relate to the government of ourſelves in general, and a care to cultivate univerſal virtue; and I cannot repeat it too often that none of the expreſſions are to be interpreted too literally. But their effect upon the mind is greater than that of any literal expreſſion. By his figurative manner of ſpeaking, Chriſt ſhows in the cleareſt manner what *diſpoſitions* we ſhould cultivate, and this diſpoſition once impreſſed leads to all right conduct, without particular directions.

2. If you expect to be treated with candour yourſelves, ſhew it to others.

Matthew vii 3. *A mote.*] Some ſuppoſe it to be a ſmall ſplinter of wood, which is more directly oppoſed to a *beam*. There are others who ſuppoſe that theſe terms denote different diſorders of the eye.

5. This teaches us that we ſhould be more attentive to our own faults, than to thoſe of other perſons. We are too ready to make excuſes for ourſelves, and to make too little allowance for others, to overlook great faults

faults in ourſelves, and to diſcover ſmall ones in them.

6. The object of this inſtruction is to do good; but where the prejudices of mankind will not ſuffer reaſon to be heard, to offer it rather exaſperates them, and brings miſchief on ourſelves, than does good. There are too many perſons in this unfavourable ſtate of mind. Jeſus perceived it more than once, and acted upon his own maxim. Thus, he does not ſeem to have attempted the reformation of the Scribes and Phariſees, contenting himſelf with expoſing their vices, and holding them out as a warning to others. We often ſee perſons deaf to the plaineſt reaſons, retaining the moſt abſurd opinions, or perſiſting in the moſt unreaſonable practices, notwithſtanding all that can be ſaid by way of remonſtrance. We ſhould all be careful to avoid ourſelves, what we ſee amiſs in others.

Theſe precepts and advices, being delivered with great conciſeneſs, are not to be underſtood without thoſe limitations that we elſe where find in ſcripture, as that *the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*, &c.

11. We are here ſuppoſed to pray with a proper temper of mind, and without that clamourous importunity which Jeſus cenſures in this very diſcourſe; but he ſhews how well diſpoſed God is, to bleſs all who with a proper temper of mind, and in a proper manner, apply to him for his bleſſing. He has a ſtronger affection for us, than any earthly parent has for his offspring; being in a higher and more proper ſenſe *our parent*, or the

author

author of our being. If our prayers are not heard, the cauſe is not in God, but in ourſelves.

12. This is with propriety called the *Golden rule* of the Goſpel; not that it is peculiar to the Goſpel, for the ſentiment occurs in other writings, but for its general excellence, and eaſy application to practice. If we will pauſe and think, nothing is eaſier than to put ourſelves in the place of another, and conſider how we ſhould feel, and what we ſhould reaſonably expect in their place. Thoſe who have had recourſe to this method muſt have often found how quickly things will appear in a quite different light in conſequence of it. This rule is good not only in the caſe of charity, but of every ſocial duty; ſo that is properly ſaid to comprize the ſubſtance of all the moral inſtruction in the law and the prophets. We ſhall violate no precept if we habitually recur to it.

19. This verſe is the ſame with Ch. iii. 10, and rather interrupts the reaſoning. *Markland.*

20. By *falſe prophets*, our Lord probably meant the ſame perſons whom he called by that name, and by that of *falſe Chriſts*, in the diſcourſe relating to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; perſons who would pretend to come from God, and impoſe upon men. But you may know them by their fruits, by their ambitious and ſelfiſh views. No good man can lay a falſe claim to a divine miſſion. On other occaſions our Lord obſerves that men's doctrine may be regarded, when their practices ſhould be avoided; as when he ſays (Mat. xxiii. 2) *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's chair. What*

they teach, that observe and do; but do not according to their works, for they say and do not.

23. From this, and from all our Lord's preaching, we ſee the great end of the goſpel is a good life. We ſhould attend to this the more, becauſe the neceſſary conſequence of overvaluing ſome things, is undervaluing others. So men lay a ſtreſs upon *faith* to the injury of duties. We ſee that perſons who lay great ſtreſs on right opinions, or ſuperſtitious practices, are very apt to think themſelves in favour with God, notwithſtanding many neglects of what they know to be moral duty. Notwithſtanding the ſcriptures abound with cautions on this head, we ſee the bulk of mankind are full of zeal for what they account *orthodox faith*, and as full of bigotry and malice againſt others who differ from them. Thus they ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel.

25. In the Holy Land rain is apt to fall in great torrents, ſo as to ſweep the rocky hills that are but ſlightly covered with ſoil.

27. The connection of this fine compariſon with the former part of the diſcourſe, ſhews that, what our Lord meant by a *good foundation*, was *good works*. This is all that is eſſential to chriſtianity. Other things may be right, and require our attention as ſuch; but good morals are the foundation of all, and without theſe nothing will be of any avail at the laſt day.

29. He ſpoke as the meſſenger of God, with the dignity and energy of the antient prophets, not as a mere interpreter of the ſayings of others like the Scribes and Phariſees. There muſt therefore have been ſomething

in

in the manner in which Jeſus delivered himſelf that would impreſs his hearers with veneration and eſteem, and contribute not a little to the effect of his excellent inſtructions.

Luke VI. 30. *Into your lap.*] The uſual dreſs in the Eaſt, is a piece of cloth about ſix yards long, and five or ſix feet broad, one corner of which is thrown over one ſhoulder, and the reſt is folded about their bodies, the outer fold hanging looſe, and ſerving for an apron, which is often rendered *lap*, or *bosom*, in the ſcriptures. This garment being very apt to get looſe, a girdle was very neceſſary to accompany it. *Shaw's Travels*, p. 225.

XI. 5, &c. This and other parables of our Lord which recommend importunity in prayer muſt not be interpreted ſo as to contradict his own directions, not to uſe *vain repetitions* in prayer, as if we expected to be heard for our much ſpeaking; but as recommending an humble and patient expectation of the bleſſings we ſolicit, notwithſtanding the Divine Being ſhould think proper for a long time to withhold them.

At midnight.] It is common in the Eaſt to travel by night, on account of the heat in the day.

7. It is cuſtomary for a whole family to ſleep in the ſame room, but not in the ſame bed; ſo that ſleeping in the ſame room was probably all that was meant by *being with him in bed*, and even thus, he muſt have diſturbed them by riſing and opening the door. Perhaps it may be rendered, My ſervants as well as myſelf are in bed; ſince παιδιον, as well as παις may ſignify a *ſervant*.

12. *A scorpion.*] The body of a white ſcorpion is ſaid to reſemble an egg.

13. *That which is good.*] Pearce prefers this reading to that which has the *Holy Spirit.*

XIII. 23. Matthew VII. 13. *Are there few that shall be saved.*] There is but too much reaſon to conclude, that the bulk of mankind, in all ages, fall far ſhort of that purity of heart and life which is required of chriſtians, and which is neceſſary to fit them for future happineſs. Secular purſuits are evidently the great objects with the bulk of mankind, and a ſupreme regard to the will of God, and a future life, are comparatively rare.

Ibid. I am ſatisfied the queſtion was aſked by perſons who thought only of a temporal kingdom. But the fact was that few of the Jews were ſaved. i. e. embraced the goſpel. I do not think that Jeſus ſpeaks of final happineſs, though what is obſerved above is very juſt. J.

24. *Will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*] i. e. they will apply too late, when the door is ſhut againſt all. This is explained more particularly, Matthew vii, 20, &c.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew VII. 6, &c. To your care and circumſpection reſpecting your own characters, in order to qualify you to reprove others, add prudence, and do not throw away your reproofs where they are not likely to be well received. This would be to do them no good, and

and to expoſe yourſelves to unneceſſary inſult and injury.

Luke XIII. 30. The Gentiles, who now enjoy the fewest advantages, ſhall be the moſt diſtinguiſhed, and the Jews, who have had the moſt advantages of a religious nature, ſhall be far behind them.

SECTION XXV.

Jeſus cures the Leper and the Centurion's Servant, and raiſes the Widow's Son.

Matt. VIII. 1.——13. Mark I. 39.——45. Luke V. 12.——16. VII. 1.——15.

HAVING conſidered all the particulars of Jeſus's excellent moral inſtructions, in his diſcourſe on the mount, we proceed to attend to the remaining tranſactions of his life, every incident of which deſerves attention, both with reſpect to the evidence of his divine miſſion, and to the doctrines he taught.

Matthew viii. 1. The miraculous cure of the leproſy was thought by the Jews to be characteriſtic of the Meſſiah, and therefore there was peculiar reaſon for enjoining this man's ſilence, *Benſon's Life of Chriſt*, p. 240. It is ſufficient, however, to ſay that the crouds of people that flocked to Chriſt from all quarters on account of his late miracle at Capernaum were ſo great, that, for the preſent, our Lord might not chuſe to draw any more people about him. He had retired to the

mountain purpoſely to avoid this croud. It is obſervable that this is the firſt time we have any account of our Lord's enjoining ſilence on any perſon whom he cured, and this we ſee he did not do till he found himſelf greatly incommoded by the fame of his public miracles.

2. The word which is here and elſewhere tranſlated *worship*, properly ſignifies to *proſtrate oneself*, which in the Eaſt is a profeſſion of profound reſpect, but ſuch reſpect as is due to men is all that was meant at the time our tranſlation was made. In 1. Kings i, 23. the whole congregation is ſaid to have *worshipped the Lord and the King*; and certainly thoſe who are ſaid to have worſhipped Chriſt in the courſe of his miniſtry did not conſider him in any other light than that of a prophet, inſpired by God. Yet ſome make uſe of this language as an argument for the divinity of Chriſt.

3. Jeſus went about healing all manner of diſeaſes, but particular mention is only made of his moſt remarkable cures; and both with reſpect to the nature of the diſeaſes, and the circumſtances attending the cures, they were particularly worthy of notice, as a proof that the power by which he acted was divine, or that of God himſelf; as he always ſaid, that of himſelf he could do nothing, and that the father who was in, or with him, did thoſe works. John v, 19. xiv, 10. Leproſy is repreſented to be a particularly loathſome and infectious diſeaſe, common in the Eaſt, and hardly ever known to be cured, and then only after a long time. The ſudden cure of it therefore, was the more aſtoniſhing, and it was completely effected to the ſatisfaction of all preſent by a touch and a few words.

4. Accor-

4. According to the Jewiſh ritual, the prieſts had certain rules given them by which to diſtinguiſh the proper leproſy from other diſeaſes of a ſimilar nature; and upon inſpection they pronounced whether the diſeaſed perſon might live in ſociety or not. *For a teſtimony unto them* is generally underſtood to mean to procure the moſt authentic teſtimony of a perfect cure. But from Mark's account (Ch. i, 44) he ſeems to have had another view. *See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing thoſe things which Moſes commanded for a teſtimony unto them.* Had he publiſhed the cure before hand, the prieſts might have found ſome pretence for cavilling, and have refuſed to pronounce him cured. however the ſame evangeliſt ſays that the injunction was without effect, for he adds, he *went out, and began to publiſh it much, and to blaze abroad the matter.* Probably, therefore, the chief reaſon for enjoining ſilence was to avoid the great concourſe of people which ſuch a miracle was ſure to attract.

5. A Centurion in the Roman army had the command of an hundred men; ſo that he had a rank ſomethink ſimilar to that of a captain with us.

9. *Under authority.*] i. e. I who am myſelf under the command of a ſuperior officer, have yet ſoldiers under me, who are perfectly obedient to me.

11. *From the Eaſt and from the Weſt.*] i. e. from tant parts of the earth.

13. This cure was ſimilar to that of the Nobleman's Son in the ſame city of Capernaum, which probably he had heard of, and therefore well knowing the averſion ſtrict

ſtrict Jews had to enter the houſes of Gentiles, he modeſtly requeſts that Jeſus would not move from the place from which he was; having the firmeſt faith in his power of curing at a diſtance, as well as near at hand which he expreſſes by a ſtriking compariſon, comparing the power that Jeſus had over diſeaſes, to his own power over the perſons under his immediate authority; an inſtance of faith which Jeſus obſerved he had not found in his own countrymen. And he takes this opportunity of ſaying that many Gentiles from all parts of the world would be diſtinguiſhed by faith, and other virtues, more than many Jews, and would thereby become intitled to a place in the kingdom of heaven, when many of the deſcendants of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob would be excluded. Whereas many Jews have maintained, that all perſons of their race would have this honour, and that it was reſerved for them only, tho' as I have obſerved before, this is not the doctrine of the modern Jews, who only ſay, that if by their good works they be received into heaven, it will be to a place of high rank in proportion to the great ſeverity of their diſcipline in this life; they being obliged to obſerve many things naturally ungrateful to them, from which the reſt of mankind are excuſed. I would obſerve that this cure being performed when Jeſus was at a diſtance, and in behalf of a ſtranger, excludes all idea of colluſion. Such cures could only be wrought by the power of God, which is the ſame in all places, and at all times. This diſorder was the *palsy*, from which, if perſons do recover, it is ſlowly, whereas this cure was both immediate and perfect.

Luke

Luke V. 12. *In a certain city.*] This muſt have been in the confines of the city, for lepers were not allowed to live in cities, the diſeaſe being infectious.

Luke VII. 11. One of the things peculiar to Jeſus was the power of working miracles attending him, as far as appears, conſtantly, wherever he went. At leaſt no proper occaſion occurred on which he did not work a miracle. The ſame, however, was the caſe with Peter and Paul, and ſome others, for a ſhort time; tho' it did not attend them through life, and it muſt be conſidered that the whole period of our Lord's miniſtry was ſhort; and as he was appointed to open this great ſcene; it may well be ſuppoſed to have been requiſite that he ſhould be diſtinguiſhed in this manner. Many have ſuppoſed that it was peculiar to Chriſt to work miracles by his own power; and that it depended upon his own will only. But, beſides that he expreſsly ſays that *of himſelf he could do nothing*, and that *the Father within him did the works*, ſo that the performance of them muſt neceſſarily have depended on the will of the Father, and not his own proper will only. It is evident from the hiſtory of the reſurrection of Lazarus, that a ſilent prayer at leaſt preceded the working of all his miracles. For he ſays, *I know that thou hearest me always*, which implies that he had prayed for divine aſſiſtance on ſimilar occaſions, and that the power was that of God in anſwer to his prayers. Beſides, if we judge from the language of ſcripture, and attend only to ſmall portions of the lives of other men, we might infer that they had the ſame power which has been aſcribed

cribed to Chriſt, eſpecially with reſpect to Peter, of whom we read Acts v, 15, *that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one.* This account fully equals any thing we read of our Saviour himſelf, and yet it is not ſuppoſed that theſe cures were performed by any power belonging to Peter, or that it depended on his mere will like that of walking; neither, therefore, ought to infer the ſame with reſpect to thoſe of Jeſus. So with reſpect to Paul, we read Acts xix, 12, *From his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

We now proceed to an account of one of the moſt remarkable of the miracles of Jeſus, his raiſing a dead perſon to life.

12. Beſides that the great number of the miracles of Jeſus excludes all idea of colluſion, or impoſition (for no impoſtor would have ventured upon ſo many as he did, eſpecially in the preſence of enemies, whoſe inveteracy would have made them ſharp ſighted) there were peculiar circumſtances attending moſt of them, which ſhew that any impoſition was impoſſible. Here we ſee Jeſus enter a city where he was probably a ſtranger, for no man could have lived more obſcurely than he had done, and conſequently had fewer connections till he appeared upon the public theatre of the world.

He

He had not even that time for retirement and ſtudy which is aſcribed to Zoroaſter and Mahomet. In this place he meets with great crowds of people, in clear day light, and in the open ſtreets, accompanying a corps to the place of interrment. The deceaſed was an only ſon, and the mother naturally much diſtreſſed. Can any body think it probable that this young man was not really dead. Would a mother have committed her only ſon to the grave without being aſſured of this fact, and muſt not many of the company have ſeen it? For in that country the dead were carried in an open bier, or ſhell, where the body lay expoſed to the inſpection of all who choſe to view it.

13. There are in the hiſtory of Jeſus many traces of a feeling compaſſionate temper, and it appeared on this occaſion. The marks of his compaſſion for the diſtreſs of the poor widow, were, no doubt, perceived by the by-ſtanders. Alſo by his firſt addreſſing himſelf to her, and bidding her in an affectionate manner ceaſe from weeping, he would in ſome meaſure prepare her for the joyful ſcene that he had planned for her.

The people of the Eaſt bury their dead without coffins, but they carry them to the grave on a bier, that is often ſhaped like one: *Harmers Observations*, Vol. II p. 156.

14. As the news of the miracles of Jeſus had by this time reached every place in Galilee, the perſons who carried this bier would naturally ſtop when he laid hold on it, and ordered them ſo to do, which it cannot be ſuppoſed they would have done at the command of a mere ſtranger.

15 We

15. We ſee here that no more exertion was neceſſary to raiſe the dead, than to heal the moſt ordinary diſeaſe. It was effected by his ſpeaking a word. For the power being that of God, all difference of greater or leſs abſolutely vaniſhes. With reſpect to the creation of all things, we read that *he ſpake and it was done, he commanded and it ſtood faſt.* This perſon was both reſtored to life, and to perfect health and ſtrength. For he ſat up immediately, and began to ſpeak. When perſons ſeemingly dead are brought to life again (which is never effected without much labour and various applications) there are many ſymptoms of returning life long before complete reſtoration.

As there was ſomething affectionate in the manner in which Jeſus opens this ſcene, there was alſo at the cloſe of it. For upon the young man being reſtored to life, Jeſus did not leave the company abruptly, but delivered him to his mother, probably ſaying ſomething pertinent on the occaſion, tho' the hiſtorian has not recorded it. For ſuch an action would naturally be accompanied with ſome words.

16. We have here a natural account of the impreſſion that was made on the people preſent by this aſtoniſhing miracle. It is ſaid that *great fear came upon them all. Wonder* or *aſtoniſhment* would have been better than fear. But indeed ſuch a degree of aſtoniſhment is neceſſarily accompanied with fear, it proving the preſence of ſuch a power as all muſt dread. Both in the Old and New Teſtament we often find expreſſions of fear in perſons apprehending themſelves in the preſence

preſence of God, or a prophet. It is natural in the preſence of perſons of ſuperior rank or power; becauſe if they have any conſciousnefs of guilt, they may apprehend that a power they cannot reſiſt may be employed againſt them. In whatever manner Jeſus performed this miracle, we ſee that the people preſent did not infer that he did it by any power of his own, but that he was a prophet, and that God by him once more viſited his people. They never thought of his being more than man. It is, indeed, univerſally acknowledged by all antient chriſtian writers, who were advocates for the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt, that even the apoſtles had no higher idea of him than that of a man before his aſcenſion into heaven.

The fame of the preceding miracles of Jeſus, is ſaid to have filled all Galilee; but this being of a much more extraordinary nature, and performed in the preſence of ſo great a multitude, would be ſtill more talked of; and accordingly it is ſaid to have filled all Judea as well as Galilee. From this time, therefore, no doubt, Jeſus would be ſufficiently watched by his many enemies; as cloſely as any unbelievers of the preſent day could wiſh him to have been, and with eyes as ſharp as their own. And yet he continued to work miracles in the ſame open manner, conſcious of no impoſition, and fearing no detection; which, indeed, he uſed no precautions to guard againſt.

SEC.

SECTION XXVI.

Jesus stills a Tempest and cures the Demoniac at Gadara.

Matt. VIII. 18.——34. Mark IV. 35.——41. V, 1. ——21. Luke IX. 57.——62. VIII. 22.——40.

IN this part of the hiſtory of Jeſus we have an account of two very extraordinary miracles, but of very different kinds; but both of them ſo circumſtanced that there could not have been any impoſition in either of the caſes.

18. It is no wonder that Jeſus was followed by great crowds of people in ſo populous a country as Galilee, after performing ſo extraordinary a miracle as that of raiſing a dead man to life. In order to avoid this concourſe of people, with whom he could not conveniently have held any diſcourſe, and by whom he would have been much incommoded, he croſſed the ſea.

20. It is probable that this Scribe, and the other perſons, who expreſſed their reſolution to follow Jeſus, had conceived the idea of his being the Meſſiah, and therefore thought that by attaching themſelves to him, they might in time gain ſome great preferment under him. Theſe were, indeed, at firſt the views and expectations of the apoſtles themſelves, as we ſhall ſee on ſeveral occaſions. Jeſus, however, took this and eve-

by

ry other opportunity of informing them, that he had nothing in this world to reward their attachment to him. He was even more deſtitute of proviſion for himſelf than brute creatures, having no place of abode that he could call his own.

22. Jeſus often affected a proverbial, and ſometimes even an enigmatical way of ſpeaking. Such ſayings would be more attended to, better remembered, and make ſtronger impreſſions when recollected afterwards, tho' not well underſtood at the time.

Let the dead bury their dead.] i. e. Let worldly minded men mind worldly things. Death is often uſed in this moral and figurative ſenſe, as *dead in treſpasses and ſins*, &c. It is probable that this man thought that by waiting till the death of his father, the uncomfortable life that our Lord now led would be over, and he would be entering upon his kingdom.

27. This is one of the few miracles that were not of a beneficent nature, tho' it was in part of that kind, as it ſtilled the fears of all who were in the ſhip, and perhaps prevented a ſhipwreck, in which many lives might have been loſt. It ſhewed that the power he exerted was properly *divine*, extending to all the laws of nature which were controlled by it, and not a charm, or taliſman, which was ſuppoſed to have only one power or mode of operation.

It is evident, however, on this, as well as on former occaſions, that the perſons who were preſent were not led by this miracle to ſuppoſe that Jeſus himſelf was any thing more than a man; tho' a man extraordinarily aided by God as a diſtinguiſhed prophet *What man-*

manner of man is this, ſay they. They had no idea of his divine, angelic or ſuperangelic nature, but one of the human race. And what do we know of Jeſus more than they and the apoſtles ſaw of him, on which to found any opinion?

We cannot be ſurpriſed at the aſtoniſhment of thoſe who were ſpectators of this great miracle. It was of ſuch a nature as no impoſtor would have attempted. The ſtorm muſt have been very violent to have put the perſons on board in fear of their lives. In theſe circumſtances an impoſtor would have been more alarmed than any other perſon; and that a perfect calm ſhould immediately follow the command of Jeſus muſt have implied, that his word was accompanied with the ſame power that originally made both the ſea and the dry land, his power who *ſpake and it was done, who commanded, and all things ſtood faſt.*

29. Luke ſays, *they beſought Jeſus that he would not command them to go out into the deep*; from which we may infer that, in the opinion of the Jews, all theſe demons were to be ſent in due time, to ſome place of puniſhment under the earth, or under the ſea, but that they were to range at large for a given time.

As it was the current opinion among the Jews that madneſs was owing to a poſſeſſion with an evil ſpirit, the madmen themſelves, who once had their ſenſes, muſt, of courſe, have had the ſame notion. Theſe madmen, as is not uncommon, knew themſelves to be ſo, and therefore thought themſelves to be poſſeſſed, and ſpoke in that character. For reaſons, of which we may not be competent judges, our Lord thought proper

to

to transfer the madneſs from theſe men to the ſwine. Perhaps to puniſh them for keeping thoſe animals, which by the law of Moſes they were not allowed to eat, and which by a law of Hyrcanus they were forbidden to keep.

32. That theſe ſwine were ſupernaturally ſeized with madneſs, is evident from their running headlong into the ſea, and being drowned there. It could not have been in the power of any man to do this; no animal whatever being ſo intractable, and ſo difficult to be led, or driven. And that any number of ſwine ſhould voluntarily, and without any ſupernatural impulſe, run into the ſea, was never known. If by any violence they had been driven into the ſea, they certainly would have made for the land, and as they ſwim very well, the greater part, or a conſiderable number of them, would no doubt, have been ſaved. For it is not ſaid that the ſea was in a ſtorm, nor are the ſhores of that ſea rocky.

Had this action, by which many perſons, perhaps innocent ones, received conſiderable damage, been properly that of a man, it would not have been juſtifiable. But ſince it was of God, it is ſufficient if it be analogous to his other works; and none can deny that the innocent as well as the guilty ſuffer alike in ſtorms, earthquakes, and other natural cauſes, all of which are as properly the works of God as this miracle of the deſtruction of the ſwine. This miracle ſupplies another argument for the miracles of Jeſus having been immediately prompted by God, by whoſe power they were effected

34. It is generally imagined that the people of this country beſought Jeſus to depart out of their coaſt through diſlike to him and his doctrine, but their requeſt might be dictated by the ſame apprehenſion that led Peter to ſay, after the miraculous draught of fiſhes, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man.* They were convinced that Jeſus was a prophet, and might be afraid that he was come to puniſh them for their ſins. It is obſervable that Jeſus ordered theſe madmen to publiſh the miracle of their cure. Perhaps, as he was leaving their country, and did not intend to ſpend much time there, he was not apprehenſive of any inconvenience from it. It could not be owing to the incredulity of the people; for if they had not been convinced of his miraculous power, they would not have contented themſelves with *beſeeching* him to leave their coaſts, but, irritated at the loſs of their ſwine, would probably have inſulted and abuſed him.

Mark V, 3. *In the tombs.*] Dr. Shaw obſerves that, among the Moors, the graves of the principal citizens have cupolas, or vaulted chambers, of four or more yards ſquare, built over them; and they frequently lie open, and afford an occaſional ſhelter from the inclemency of the weather.

5. Cutting and ſlaſhing the body, eſpecially the arms, is often uſed as an expreſſion of great anguiſh or vehemence of paſſion, in the Eaſt. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 516.

Luke IX. 61. To ſettle my affairs at home. W. 62. *Fit*; εὐθετος, *properly diſpoſed.*

P. R.

PARAPHRASE.

As no man is fit to manage a plough who looks behind him, and is not intent upon his work; ſo no man is fit for the kingdom of heaven, who does not give his whole attention to it, and who, in the preſent circumſtances of things, is not even ready to abandon all for it.

SECTION XXVII.

The cure of the Paralytic Person, the Call of Matthew, and the Discourse of Jesus with the Pharisees.

Matt. IX. 1——17. Mark II. 1——22. Luke V. 17——39.

AFTER the remarkable cure of the demoniac, or according to Matthew, of the two demoniacs, on the other, or the eaſtern ſide of the ſea of Galilee, Jeſus returned to the weſtern ſide, where we generally find him, and continues his courſe of miracles and moral inſtructions as before.

1. That is, Capernaum, where he or his family, probably reſided, after having left Nazareth. Here he had performed the great miracle of the cure of the nobleman's ſon, who met him at Cana. Here he firſt preached in a public ſynagogue, when he cured a demoniac; and in this city he cured Peter's wife's mother, which brought ſo great a crowd about him that he

had been obliged to leave the city in a private manner very early the next morning; and here he afterwards cured the Roman centurion's ſervant. It is no wonder, therefore, that the people of this place ſhould have the moſt perfect confidence in his power to cure any diſorder whatever.

2. *Son*.] An expreſſion of condeſcenſion and tenderneſs.

The palſy is a diſorder which ſeldom gives way to any power of medicine, and then never ſuddenly. This man being confined to his bed, muſt have been perfectly helpleſs, and conſequently in ſuch a ſtate as was quite hopeleſs.

3. By *blaſphemy* the Jews appear to have meant any expreſſions ſavouring of arrogance with reſpect to God, as the aſſuming of more power than they thought God would give a man, and not always ſomething *againſt God*, or derogating from his perfections, cenſuring his inſtitutions or his government. No man retained a more uniform reverence for God than Jeſus did. But being a prophet of the higheſt order, he made uſe of language which no preceding prophet had uſed before; and it is remarkable that on this occaſion, and others alſo, when Jeſus perceived his hearers diſpoſed to cavil, he choſe to uſe ſuch language as they might more eaſily cavil at, that they might fully ſhew their diſpoſitions. Thus, when he might have ſaid, as he uſually did, *Riſe up and walk*, or ſome other expreſſion importing nothing more than the removal of the diſorder, he here made uſe of a phraſe that was ſynonymous indeed

indeed, in the ſenſe in which he uſed it, but which was likewiſe capable of another and very offenſive meaning.

6. *Take up thy bed,*] Meaning the carpet on which he was brought, and on which he ſlept.

By this it appears that by the phraſe *thy ſins be forgiven thee*, Jeſus at firſt only meant, may thy diſorder be removed, ſin being conſidered as the cauſe of evil in general; and that as both the expreſſions were equally eaſy of pronunciation, he was at liberty to make uſe of which of them he pleaſed; and the ſudden recovery of the ſick perſon from this deplorable ſituation, did not of itſelf prove more than Jeſus's power of healing. But as he choſe the more obnoxious expreſſion, after it had been remarked upon in that ſenſe, he ſeemed to intimate that he had the power which his hearers thought to be conveyed by it, viz. that God had inveſted him with a power of diſcerning the real characters of men, and conſequently of pronouncing whether they were entitled to the divine forgiveneſs or not; the ſame power that he will diſplay in a more ample manner at the day of judgment. But this is no greater power than God may give to any other man, as he did to Peter, when he pronounced (Acts viii, 23.) that Simon of Samaria was *in the gall of litterness and the bond of iniquity*, which implied that his ſins were not forgiven.

8. It is evident that the multitude which ſaw this great miracle inferred nothing more from it, than that Jeſus was a man endued with great power by God, and by no means that he himſelf was God, or poſſeſſed of a nature more than human.

9. *Publicans were odious* to the Jews, both on account *of their being* employed by the Romans to collect *the tribute of them as* a conquered people, and likewiſe *on account* of the extortions they were often guilty of.

There are ſome other circumſtances attending this miracle not mentioned by Matthew, but not omitted by Mark or Luke, the account of the former I ſhall therefore conſider.

Mark ii, 1. *After some days.*] Some of the Latin MSS. ſays Pearce, have *octo dies, eight days*, ſo that it ſeems ſome Greek copies had δι η ημερων. Of this I had no knowledge when, from other circumſtances, I limited this excurſion to about that ſpace of time. Pearce, however, thinks the time muſt have been greater; but then he, with the generality of commentators, ſuppoſes Chriſt to have preached three years and a half.

4. Dr. Shaw ſuppoſes that our Lord might be preaching in the court, or quadrangle of the houſe, over which it was cuſtomary to extend a covering, or veil, to ſhelter perſons from the heat, &c. and that the people who brought the paralytic perſon carried him up the ſtaircaſe, which is generally within the court, and only removed that temporary covering of the open court, in order to let him down by the ſide of the wall, near the place where Jeſus was. To let down δια των κεραμων he ſhews, does not mean *through the tiling*, but *by the side of it*; juſt as Paul was let down δια του τειχους *by the wall of* Damaſcus, Acts ix. 26. *Shaw's Travels*, p. 211.

But

But as it is here ſaid that there was no room to receive the perſons who brought this ſick man, no not ſo much as about the door, Jeſus was probably in the house, and therefore that ſome part of the roof was taken off, which might perhaps be done without much noiſe or inconvenience of any kind, as their buildings were uſually conſtructed. The flat roofs of oriental houſes will make this operation much more eaſy than it could be with ours.

Matt. IX. 13. We have here an example of the Jewiſh mode of compariſon. The meaning is not that ſacrifices were improper, but that mercy, and other moral duties and diſpoſitions, are things of ſuperior value.

15. In this Jeſus diſcovers the tenderneſs he had for his diſciples, in not impoſing upon them more than they were able to bear. He foreſaw a great deal of affliction before them, after he ſhould have left them, and he was not willing to diſtreſs them unneceſſarily, and before the time.

17. Luke adds another ſaying of Jeſus with reſpect to *wine*, which ſeems to have little or no connection with the former, and was delivered on ſome other accaſion. However, I ſhall give a paraphraſe by which his meaning may be explained on the idea of this being given in connection.

Luke V. 39. This verſe is wanting in the Cambridge MSS. and latin copies, nor are there any traces of it in the other goſpels. O.

PARAPHRASE.

Luke V. 39. Not only is it inconvenient to put things together that do not ſuit one another, as a piece of new cloth to an old garment, or new wine into old leathern bottles; but even too ſudden a tranſition from one thing to another is not agreeable. Thus perſons who have been uſed to drink old wine cannot immediately reconcile themſelves to that which is new. For though this be more pleaſant to others, they think the old, to which they have been accuſtomed, to be better; and it is adviſeable to indulge men in their innocent prejudices and habits.

SECTION XXVIII.

The cure of the woman who had the bloody iſſue, the raiſing of Jairus's daughter, and the cure of the two blind men and the dumb Demoniac.

Matt. IX. 18,——34 Mark V. 22.——43. Luke VIII. 41——56.

MATTHEW IX. 18. *My daughter is now dead.*] According to Matthew, Jairus thought his daughter to be actually dead. According to Mark and Luke ſhe was only at the point of death. Perhaps the father did not know certainly whether ſhe was dead or not; but having heard that Jeſus had raiſed from the dead the ſon of the widow at Nain, he might have no doubt of his power even to raiſe his daughter from the dead.

34 *Beel-*

It is remarkable that there is more buſineſs recorded as tranſacted on this day in the part of the goſpel hiſtory to which we are now attending, than in any other in the hiſtory of Jeſus, viz. the call of Matthew, the diſcourſe with the Scribes and Phariſees, the application of Jairus, the cure of the woman who had the iſſue of blood, and the raiſing of his daughter from the dead; and probably alſo the cure of the two blind men and the dumb demoniac. And yet this is not more than might fall within the compaſs of a day. We have already attended to the two firſt articles, and now proceed to the latter. The ſcene of all theſe tranſactions is ſtill at Capernaum.

Mark V. 30. Jeſus knew, no doubt by a divine impulſe, that the woman was cured at the time that ſhe touched him, and with his own concurrence. For we are not to ſuppoſe that the mere touching of him would, in all caſes as by a charm, have neceſſarily cured any diſeaſe.

31. This freedom that the diſciples of Jeſus took with him on this occaſion, and others, is inconſiſtent with their conſidering him as any other than a man like themſelves. What they ſay to him here is the ſame that they would have ſaid to any other perſon who ſhould have complained, as they thought, without reaſon of a trifling inconvenience.

34. There is ſomething peculiarly affectionate in the manner in which Jeſus addreſſes this poor woman, calling her *daughter*, commending her for the ſtrength of her faith, and aſſuring her that ſhe was radically cured.

35 Being

35. Being ſatisfied that the young woman was actually dead, they naturally conſidered it as a hopeleſs caſe, and therefore thought it was to no purpoſe to give Jeſus the trouble of going to the houſe. If theſe perſons had heard of his having raiſed to life the young man of Nain, they might conſider it as ſo extraordinary a caſe, that it was unreaſonable to expect a repetition of ſo great a miracle.

36. We ſee the affectionate manner of Jeſus on this occaſion, as well as the preceding, in deſiring the father of the young woman not to be alarmed at the report of his ſervants, but to have the ſame faith that he would have had if they had not brought him ſuch an account.

37. This is the firſt time that we find Jeſus make choice of theſe three witneſſes of particular events. The ſecond was at his transfiguration, and the third at his agony in the garden. The reaſon ſeems to have been that he would not have any of theſe things to be generally known till a proper time afterwards. This, at leaſt, was the caſe with reſpect to the transfiguration. But why this tranſaction might not have been known to all the apoſtles, as well as to thoſe three, does not appear. The raiſing of the widow's ſon, and of Lazarus, which was done in the preſence of great numbers, and which of courſe could not be ſecret, might ſeem to have required ſecrecy as much as this.

38. It is cuſtomary in the Eaſt for people to crowd to the place where perſons are dead, and to bewail them in a noiſy manner, in token of reſpect. Sir John Chardin ſays that the concourſe of people where

where perſons lie dead is incredible. Every body runs thither, the poor and the rich; and the former more eſpecially, make a ſtrange noiſe. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 135.

Dr. Shaw ſays that, upon funeral occaſions, it is alſo cuſtomary in the Eaſt to hire women to act the part of mourners, who, like *præficæ*, or mourning women of old, are *skilful in lamentation*, (Amos v. 16.) and great miſtreſſes of thoſe melancholy expreſſions. And, indeed, he ſays they perform their parts with ſuch proper ſounds, geſtures, and motions, that they rarely fail to work up the aſſembly to an extraordinary pitch of thoughtfulneſs and ſorrow. *Shaw's Travels*, p. 242.

39. By this ſoft phraſe Jeſus intimated that the death of this young woman would not be of long continuance, but would reſemble a ſound ſleep, from which ſhe would ſoon awake.

40. Theſe women, who knew their buſineſs, and who had probably ſeen the young woman to be actually dead, mocking Jeſus, ſhews that they had no doubt of her being dead. They, therefore, thought that he would only expoſe himſelf by going to cure her. Being perſons of a low profeſſion, and no ſerious characters, they would be under no reſtraint from a reverence for the perſon of Jeſus.

42. According to Luke, Jeſus commanded them to give her ſome thing to eat. This circumſtance, as well as that of her walking, were ſufficient proofs of her being reſtored not only to life, but alſo to perfect health. No wonder that all who were preſent were *aſtoniſhed* at it.

Had

Had not Luke ſo particularly referred the account of the raiſing of the widow's ſon at Nain, to an earlier period in the hiſtory, it would have been probable from the circumſtances, that this was the firſt time that Jeſus had raiſed any perſon from a ſtate of death to life. We may ſtill ſuppoſe this to have been the caſe if we admit that Luke, whoſe chronology is by no means exact, was miſtaken with reſpect to the order of theſe events. We ſhall then perceive a natural gradation in the three miracles by which Jeſus raiſed perſons to life. The firſt was a perſon juſt dead, the ſecond was one who was carried out to be buried, and the third had been dead and buried four days.

Matt. IX. 30. This is the firſt account of Jeſus curing *blindneſs*, which is a diſeaſe that by natural means is never removed ſuddenly, except by a ſurgical operation, and then the wound is not ſoon healed. Here then we ſee the evident finger of God.

33. This man was both diſordered in his ſenſes, which was aſcribed to the poſſeſſion of demons, and alſo dumb. But both the diſorders were cured at the ſame time.

34. *Beelzebub* (for ſo the *prince of dæmons* is called, Mat. xii. 24,) ſignifies *lord of flies*.] It was the name of one of the gods of the Philiſtines. See 2 Kings i. 23. In the Greek of the New Teſtament it is *Beelzeboul*, which is *lord of a dunghill*, perhaps ſo called by the Jews out of contempt. How this perſonage came to be conſidered as *prince of the dæmons* does not appear. Our Lord uſes the word as ſynonymous to *Satan*, and

devil

devil, that is the principle, or ſource of evil in general, a mere allegorical perſonage.

We ſhall, on a future occaſion, hear what Jeſus had to obſerve with reſpect to this malicious cenſure of the Phariſees, than which nothing could be a more evident mark of obduracy of mind, ſuch as no reaſonable evidence could ſatisfy.

Luke VIII. 44. *To touch the hem of his garment.*] Probably to kiſs it; which is a mark of profound reſpect and reverence. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 34. Being in a ſtate of uncleanneſs, ſhe might think it wrong to touch the body of Jeſus, and on that account contented herſelf with touching his clothes.

SECTION XXIX.

Jeſus walks in the Corn-fields, cures the man who had a withered hand, and appoints the twelve Apoſtles.

Matt. XII. 1——21. X. 2—4. Mark II. 23——28. III. 1——19. Luke VI. 1——16.

THE Phariſees were thoſe of the Jews who profeſſed the moſt zealous attachment to the laws of Moſes. They not only rigorouſly obſerved all the ritual of it, but added many obſervances of their own invention. And what is peculiarly remarkable, notwithſtanding the moſt expreſs and repeated declarations to the contrary in the antient prophets, they laid more ſtreſs on things of this nature than on moral duties.

ties. Nothing can ſhew in a ſtronger light than theſe facts do, how prone men are to attend to any thing rather than to their hearts and their lives. This caſe, that of the ſuperſtitious Catholics, and the practices of many heathen nations, ſhews that there is no auſterity ſo painful that men will not endure rather than do what ſeems to be much eaſier, viz. attend to the due regulation of their appetites and paſſions, on which the whole of our moral conduct depends. We know, however, and are repeatedly told it in the ſcriptures, that it is the heart that God looks to, and to outward appearances no farther than they indicate what is in the heart from which they proceed. Whatever it be that God and the prophets in his name appoint of a ceremonial or external nature, ought, no doubt, to be done, whether we can ſee any reaſon for it or not; but not ſo as to leave things of more importance undone. Accordingly, we find on ſeveral occaſions, that prophets, and other good men, have paid no regard to poſitive inſtructions, when the obſervance of them would have interfered with the practice of moral duties. Jeſus took frequent opportunities of ſhewing the abſurdity of the conduct of the Jewiſh Phariſees in this reſpect, particularly with regard to their ſuperſtitious obſervance of the ſabbath.

Matt. XII. 1. This by the laws of Moſes they were allowed to do, in any perſon's field or vineyard through which they had occaſion to paſs, but they were not to carry any away with them.

2. As no manner of work was, by the ſecond commandment, to be done on the Sabbath, they were not content

content to forbid *labour* properly ſo called, that labour by which men gain their ſubſiſtence, but every action that could be avoided. But for the ſame reaſon he might have forbidden perſons to go out of their houſes, or even out of their beds; but they had a rule by which they were allowed to go to the next ſynagogue on the ſabbath, or a mile or two, which was therefore called a Sabbath day's journey.

4. David did not ſtrictly ſpeaking, enter into the houſe of God, but met the prieſt carrying away the ſhew bread, which was to have been eaten by them only; and this he took without being reproved for it. He was in great haſte to eſcape from Saul, and had not had time to make any proviſion for his journey.

5. Viz. by killing cattle for ſacrifice, which was a laborious buſineſs.

6. Meaning himſelf; and he might ſay that he was greater than the temple, as a mere prophet; tho' he might alſo mean to intimate, without being more explicit, that he was the Meſſiah, whom the Jews looked towards as the greateſt of all the prophets.

7. This is quoted from Hoſea vi, 6, but did not mean that God did not chuſe ſacrifice, but that he preferred mercy, and other good works to it. It was the Jewiſh mode of expreſſing the preference of one thing to an other.

8. *Son of man* is an indefinite expreſſion, and by it, for ſome reaſon that does not clearly appear, Jeſus frequently choſe to characterize himſelf. But it may be underſtood of any man, and in this ſenſe it is true that man is lord of the Sabbath, it being appointed for his uſe,

uſe, as it is expreſſed by Mark, Ch. ii, 27. And as this is immediately connected with the other expreſſion from Matthew, it ſeems to be explanatory of it. It is not probable that at this time Jeſus choſe publickly to announce himſelf to be the Meſſiah, who had power to alter the ceremonial law. Nor, indeed, does it appear that Jeſus did at any time, or in any reſpect, ſet aſide this part of the law of Moſes. To the Jews it will probably be always obligatory, tho' they ſhould become chriſtians.

10. This diſorder is a partial palſy, which is never cured ſuddenly; ſo that the immediate and complete cure of this diſorder, and of others of a ſimilar nature, and in the preſence of perſons far from being prejudiced in favour of Jeſus, which was the caſe in this inſtance, was with the greateſt propriety ſelected by the evangeliſts as proof of his divine miſſion.

We ſee the extreme captiouſneſs and arrogance of theſe teachers of the law, in queſtioning a man whoſe power of working miracles they could not deny in this manner, as if God would have empowered any man to act contrary to his will. Yet, preſuming on their influence, and knowing that other leading men in the country had taken umbrage at the reputation of Jeſus, they were willing to make a handle even of his doing good, and that by the immediate power of God, in order to take advantage againſt him.

11. Here Jeſus appeals to their own cuſtoms, which were evidently contrary to their general maxims. But it ſeems to have been underſtood at the time, that acts of *neceſſity*, or of *mercy*, were lawful on the Sabbath day.

14. *He-*

Mark III. 6. *Herodians.*] Theſe were rather a civil than a religious ſect. All we know of them is, that they oppoſed the claims of the other Jews to an exemption from paying tribute to the Romans, by whoſe power Herod was king; and were in general adherents of the Romans.

How malignant muſt have been the diſpoſition of theſe Phariſees, to conſult how to take the life of a man whoſe miraculous works they could not deny, becauſe he did not court their favour, and they expected no advantage from him. But ſuch is human nature univerſally in the ſame circumſtances. Men who are void of a principle of piety and virtue will have their own advantage in view, and whatever does not favour *that*, they will, on one pretence or other, oppoſe, and even imagine they do right in ſo doing.

Matt. XII. 18. *Shew judgment to the Gentiles;*] i. e. declare the law, the law that Jeſus was to declare from God to all the world. *Pearce.*

20. *Send forth judgment unto victory. Till he have ſettled or eſtabliſhed the law or commandment.* Pearce. But it may only ſignify, in general, till he ſhall make the cauſe of righteouſneſs and truth victorious.

This quotation is from the forty ſecond chapter of Iſaiah, and if it relate to the Meſſiah, as it probably does, it is characteriſtic of his meekneſs and unambitious temper. This appeared in Jeſus enjoining ſilence on ſeveral perſons in whoſe favour he had worked miracles, that he might not excite more attention than was neceſſary for the purpoſe of his miſſion.

21. The addition *In his name shall the Gentiles trust*, was not neceſſary to the evangeliſt's immediate purpoſe, but it follows the paſſage which he had occaſion to quote, and it expreſſes the extenſive benefit which the world would derive from the Meſſiah. He was to be a bleſſing not to the Jews only, but to all nations, a *light to enlighten them*; as we in this country ſo remote from Judea are happy in experiencing.

Mark II. 26. *In the days of Abiathar the high-prieſt.*] It appears from 1 Sam. xxi, 8, &c. that Abimelech was high prieſt when David took the ſhew-bread, and not Abiathar, who was his ſon, and ſucceeded him.

Matt. X. 2. The apoſtles are here divided into pairs, probably as they were ſent out upon their miſſion by *two and two*. MARKLAND.

Hitherto Jeſus had been accompanied in an irregular manner, as we may ſay, by all perſons promiſcuouſly, who had moſt leiſure, and who were moſt ſtruck with his miracles and diſcourſes; and perhaps few perſons attended him conſtantly. But from this time, directed no doubt by infinite wiſdom, he proceeded to the choice of twelve conſtant companions; perſons who being with him at all times, as of his family, might have an opportunity of knowing him thoroughly, and of obſerving his whole conduct; ſo that without any ſupernatural aſſiſtance, they might be witneſſes of his life, doctrine, miracles, death, and reſurrection, to that and every future age, and no reaſonable doubt might remain concerning them.

That

That this was the reaſon of the appointment of theſe twelve, we may infer from what preceded the choice of another apoſtle, to ſucceed Judas. For, on this occaſion, Peter ſays (Acts i, 21.) *Wherefore of those men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.* Having known him ſo long, and ſo intimately, it could never be ſaid that they were miſtaken with reſpect to his perſon, and did not know him again after a ſeparation of a few days. It appears, however, from this paſſage, that tho' twelve perſons only were expreſsly appointed for this purpoſe, many others were ſufficiently, if not equally qualified for the office of apoſtles, ſince others beſides the twelve had attended Jeſus almoſt as much.

That this meaſure, of the appointment of the twelve apoſtles, was taken with the greateſt deliberation, and under a divine direction, may appear from what Luke ſays of Jeſus ſpending the preceding night in prayer. Luke vi, 12. *And it came to pass in those days, that he went into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God*, or as it may be rendered, in *an oratory*, a place built for the purpoſe of prayer.

Mark III. 14. Beſides the principal deſign of ſetting apart the twelve apoſtles, viz. that, as it is ſaid *they might be with him*, in order to be witneſſes of his doctrine, miracles, and reſurrection, there was a farther uſe of it, viz. that Jeſus might occaſionally ſend them to preach in places where he could not conveniently go himſelf,

on which occaſion they were endued with the ſame powers which he had exerciſed.

19. Theſe twelve apoſtles are, in all the evangeliſts, mentioned in the ſame order, beginning with Peter; who without any particular deſignation, ſeems to have taken the lead among them, both before and after the reſurrection of Jeſus. He appears to have had a warm honeſt heart, and to have had the faults naturally incident to ſuch a character. But as he never exerciſed any power more than the other apoſtles, and had no appointment to be their head, it is with little reaſon that the biſhops of Rome as ſucceſſors of this apoſtle (if ever he was at Rome, and could be ſaid to have been biſhop there) found their claim of ſuperiority to all other biſhops in the chriſtian church.

Judas is always mentioned the leaſt in the catalogue of apoſtles, as, no doubt, the leaſt worthy of the character. It is evident that Jeſus knew from the beginning what his real character was, and what part he would act. But notwithſtanding this, there was the greateſt wiſdom in the appointment of him, as it might be depended upon, that if he had been conſcious of any impoſture in the conduct of Jeſus, he would have revealed it, rather than have hanged himſelf for anguiſh of mind; when, by the temptation of a bribe, he had been induced to betray him.

SEC.

SECTION XXX.

The blind and dumb Demoniac, the Discourse concerning the sin against the Holy Spirit, and the Sign from Heaven. Jesus's mother and brethren desire to speak to him.

Matt. XII. 22——50. Mark III. 20——35. Luke XI. 14——32. XII. 10. VIII. 19——21.

MATTHEW XII. 22. Previous to the history here recorded by Matthew, a little incident is mentioned by Mark which shews the affectionate concern which the relations of Jesus had for him. Mark iii, 20—21. Previous to this Jesus had spent a whole night upon a mountain, and tho' he might have been in what the Jews called an oratory, or place for prayer, it was without a roof, and had no convenience for sleeping. Immediately after his passing the night in this place, the multitude crouded about him, so that he had had no time to take any refreshment. This his friends and relations would naturally think was too great exertion, and they might fear that, without his attending to it, he would quite exhaust himself. For the phrase *he is beside himself*, shows nothing more than their great concern for him, as a man who neglected himself, not being aware of the natural consequence of so much exertion.

23. That is, the Messiah.

27. *By whom do your children cast them out?*]

Many Jews practiced exorciſm in order to expel dæmons, a practice that was certainly more liable to objection than the conduct of our Lord, who, without any *preparatory ceremony*, only commanded them peremptorily to depart.

30. *He that is not with me.*] Some refer this to Satan, as if our Lord had ſaid, He (Satan) not being with me, or in league with me (as the preceding argument ſhews) muſt be againſt me. But then I think it ſhould have been ουτος and not ὁ.

31. *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Spirit.*] [All the reproaches that were thrown upon our Lord himſelf, perſonally, he diſregarded; but a reflection on the perſon and authority by which he acted, he conſidered as unpardonable. All the evidence of the goſpel was the miraculous works performed by Chriſt, but more eſpecially by the apoſtles, after the deſcent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecoſt. To evade and reſiſt this evidence, and on ſuch a very abſurd pretence, as that thoſe glorious and benevolent works were performed by the agency of an evil ſpirit, argued ſuch blindneſs, perverſeneſs, and hardneſs of heart, as muſt have been of the moſt malignant nature, and abſolutely incurable: for no other means remained to convince and reform them.

32. *Neither in this age, nor in the age to come.*] This may have been a proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying that it ſhould never be; or the two ages may mean the Jewiſh and chriſtian diſpenſations. It is to be obſerved, however, that this, like any other unpardonable ſin, muſt be under-

underſtood to be a ſin not repented of. It is very poſſible however, that our Lord did not mean to aſſert that the ſin againſt the Holy Spirit was abſolutely unpardonable, but only that any other ſin ſhall be forgiven ſooner than this, i. e. this guilt is of a much deeper die; uſing a common Hebraiſm, by which one thing is aſſerted, and another denied, merely to denote compariſon, as was obſerved before.

35. Theſe juſt reflections Jeſus was led to make from perceiving the malignant diſpoſition which theſe Scribes and Phariſees ſhewed. No good man, who could therefore be diſpoſed to think as favourably as poſſible of others, could have made the uncharitable reflections which they did.

36. *Idle word* αργον λογον, in a paſſage of Origen, ſignifies *a ſophism*, or *falſe reaſoning*, and with a view to deceive, as Dr. Macknight obſerves. In this therefore, our Lord may be ſuppoſed to have referred with great propriety and ſeverity, to the conduct of the Phariſees on this very occaſion, when they were endeavouring to deceive the people by their falſe reaſoning, in order to prevent their becoming his diſciples.

Iſaiah XXVIII. Matthew XII. 36. I am inclined to think that αργον from ασεργον is one of the words like αχρηστον, which denotes ſomething ſtronger than the derivation ſeems to import. Things *not convenient* i. e. immoral actions, are not actions merely triflingly bad—but highly ſo. So *here* αργον denotes calumniating words, highly wrong, i. e. thoſe calumnies juſt uttered againſt him—as if he ſaid, It is not for your

injurious actions alone—but your *calumniating expressions* alſo, that you ſhall be brought to judgment. J.

In the heart of the earth.] A Jewiſh phraſe, or ſimply *in the earth.* Thus in Ex. xxviii. 2. Tyre is ſaid to be *in the heart of the ſea*, though it was on an iſland, at a very ſmall diſtance from the continent.

Conſidering the general expectation of the Meſſiah by the Jews about the time of the appearance of Jeſus, it is not ſuprizing that the ſight of his miracles ſhould lead them to ſuppoſe that he might be the perſon. But there were ſome objections to this opinion, which the Scribes and Phariſees, and indeed the nation in general, could not eaſily get over. The principal of them was his not aſſuming kingly power, which, however, they might ſuppoſe that he would do in due time. But another objection was grounded on the manner in which they ſuppoſed the Meſſiah would make his firſt appearance, which they thought from this conſtruction of the prophecy of Daniel, would be particularly illuſtrious.

38. The repeated demands of the Jews to ſee a ſign from heaven, ſeems to have ariſen from the literal interpretation of Daniel vii, 13, 14. *Behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came to the Antient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, ſhould ſerve him.* The Jews, therefore, expected that when the Meſſiah, here called *the Son of man*, ſhould come, it would be in the clouds; or at leaſt that ſome extra-

extraordinary appearance in the heavens would be uſed to point him out to them.

This will in ſome meaſure explain why the Jews ſaid that when the Meſſiah came no man could know whence he would come, tho' they were at the ſame time perſuaded that he would be a deſcendant of David, and be born at Bethlehem. They therefore knew both his family, and the place of his birth; but where he would be, antecedent to his coming in the clouds of heaven, to enter upon his kingdom, they could not tell.

39. It is evident from this, and other places, that our Lord often ſpake in ſuch a manner as that he could not have meant to be perfectly underſtood by his hearers at the time, but only afterwards, either when the minds of his diſciples ſhould be more enlightened, or when the events that he foretold ſhould come to paſs.

40 This is the firſt intimation that Jeſus gave of his death and reſurrection, and it was in the preſence of a mixed multitude. Perhaps in part from this diſcourſe, and in part from what might tranſpire from the apoſtles, when he afterwards told them more plainly that he was to be put to death, and that he ſhould riſe again the third day, with reſpect to which they were not enjoined ſecrecy, the enemies of Jeſus were well apprized of his intended reſurrection at the time of his death; tho' his own diſciples, who could never entertain the idea of his actual death, and conſequently not that of his literal reſurrection, had no ſuch expectation.

42. This may look like vanity in Jeſus. But no perſon can be juſtly blamed for entertaining a *juſt* idea of his

his own character and worth. Without this no perſon, whether he ſpeaks of it or not, which can make no real difference, can act up to his character. Beſides, it was, on ſeveral accounts proper that the enemies of Jeſus ſhould be fully apprized of his dignity, that they might reject him at their great peril, and not be able to ſay that they knew not who he was, or what riſk they ran in rejecting him.

Jeſus was far from aſſuming any praiſe to himſelf, but always aſcribed every thing that was extraordinary in him to his Father. He ſaid repeatedly, *I can of my own self do nothing. The Father within me he doth the works. I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* He exacted no ſervile attendance from his followers. On the contrary, he ſaid that *he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*; and he required of his followers the ſame humble demeanour of which he gave a pattern in himſelf. This, however, is a mark of the greateſt real dignity, calculated to inſpire us both with veneration and with love.

43. By this parable of the *unclean spirit*, which, according to the vulgar notion, frequented barren and deſert places, our Lord deſcribes the wretched depravity of the Jewiſh nation, which had been much corrupted before the Babyloniſh captivity, had been reformed by that calamity, but afterwards ſunk into greater wickedneſs than ever, for which they were doomed to ſeverer puniſhments, and of longer continuance, than thoſe they had ſuffered before.

46. This conduct of our Lord by no means betrays any want of proper reſpect for his mother and brethren.

But

But being now employed in an office of the higheſt dignity, which reſpected the whole human race, they did wrong to interrupt him. However, inſtead of reproving them, he only took that opportunity of delivering a moſt noble ſentiment, with peculiar emphaſis, expreſſing his undiſtinguiſhing regard to all his diſciples and followers. Or perhaps without intending any *reproof*, he might only lay hold of the incident for the ſake of introducing his excellent obſervation.

By this ſpeech, delivered in this public manner, Jeſus would cut off all undue expectation of particular diſtinction or advantage to be enjoyed in his kingdom, on account of any natural relationſhip to him. And it was very wiſe and proper that the relations of Jeſus ſhould be fully apprized of this.

SECTION XXXI.

The Parables of the Sower of Taxes, of the Grain of Mustard Seed, and of the Leaven.

Matt. XIII, 1.——35. Mark IV, 1.——20. 25——34.
Luke VIII. 1——18. XIII. 18——22.

THE method of conveying inſtruction by means of *parables*, or feigned ſtories, is very antient, and has been more particularly uſed in the Eaſt. There are ſome examples of it in the Old Teſtament. But no teacher ever made ſo much uſe of parables as Jeſus, tho' hitherto he has not had much recourſe to them.

In

In his diſcourſe on the mount he made uſe of many ſtriking *comparisons*, to illuſtrate and enforce his meaning, but the only proper parable we have hitherto met with is that of the unclean ſpirit in the preceding ſection, by which he intended to expreſs the character and fate of the Jewiſh nation in general. He did not, however, make the application himſelf, and it would not probably occur to any of his hearers, or be underſtood till it was reflected upon afterwards. This, indeed, ſeems to have been the intention of Jeſus in moſt, if not all, his parables. He did not expect, or wiſh, to be underſtood at the time, but to give his hearers ſomething to reflect upon, and make out afterwards, when in conſequence of its having been ſome time unintelligible to them, and been the ſubject of their thoughts and converſation, it would make the deeper impreſſion.

In this ſection we have ſome parables with reſpect to which Jeſus avowed that he did not intend to be underſtood by the bulk of his audience. For, as appeared by the malicious conſtruction that had juſt before been put upon his conduct by the Phariſees who ſaid that he caſt out dæmons by Beelzebub, they were not likely to have profited by plainer inſtructions, of which indeed Jeſus had not been ſparing.

The parables in this ſection are prophetical, prefiguring the reception that the goſpel would meet with from perſons of different characters, and for this reaſon they could not be underſtood by the hearers. That our Lord did not intend to be underſtood by them, he himſelf acknowledges, v. 11, and, in his application of the

the prophecy of Iſaiah, who foretold the obſtinacy and incredulity of this generation. Our Lord ſhewed all poſſible condeſcenſion to thoſe who came to him with a good diſpoſition, but he very juſtly and prudently, behaved in a different manner to the captious and worldly minded, or to perſons under the influence of any other bad diſpoſition.

2. Sitting, but in an elevated place, was always the poſture of a Jewiſh teacher; ſo that when Jeſus ſat down, it was an intimation that he was going to ſpeak, as ſtanding up would be with us. The latter, however, is certainly more favourable to ſpeaking loud, and I would obſerve that Jeſus muſt have exerted great ſtrength of voice to have made himſelf diſtinctly heard by a multitude, ſuch as generally crouded after him, from a ſhip; as, in the calmeſt weather, at leaſt in our ſeas, the rolling of the waves to the ſhore, makes a conſiderable noiſe; tho' in that ſmall, and inland ſea, or lake, it might not be ſo great, and a gentle breeze from the water would greatly aſſiſt the voice. It is probable however, that Jeſus never ſpake long at any time. He made no long ſpeeches, but generally delivered himſelf in ſhort ſentences, or parables of no great length, and he might do this with conſiderable pauſes.

9. What immediately follows appears, from the circumſtances, and the account of the other evangeliſts, to have been delivered to the diſciples in the abſenſe of the multitude afterwards, tho' in Matthew the account is uninterrupted for the ſake of introducing the obſervations with more advantage in other reſpects. Mark ſays, that this converſation paſſed when he was alone

alone with the diſciples. Ch. iv. 10. *When he was alone, they who were about him, with the twelve, aſked him of the parable.*

13. Here Jeſus avows his ſpeaking in parables on purpoſe to conceal his meaning from the multitude; but it was becauſe they would not have received any benefit from plainer diſcourſe. What he foreſaw would have been loſt upon them, he did not chuſe to impart. Some of them, however, might be ſtruck with the parable, and reflect upon it with advantage afterwards, eſpecially when they ſaw it exemplified in the preaching of the apoſtles.

15. Jeſus here quotes Is. vi. 9, 10. which is evidently deſcriptive of the Jews in the time of the prophet. But becauſe it was equally true of the Jews in our Saviour's time, he ſays it was *fulfilled* in them; by which, however, he could only mean that it was applicable to them. The meaning of the paſſage is obvious, which is, that they were ſo violently prejudiced againſt the truth, and againſt all reformation, that no natural means of conviction or inſtruction would have any effect upon them. And this is a ſtate of mind that is by no means peculiar to Jews. We ſee too much of it every day among ourſelves, and not only in what relates to morals, but the common conduct of life. How many perſons are there who, as we uſually ſay, *will hear no reaſon*, how plainly or mildly ſoever it be propoſed to them.

17. How juſtly may we apply this to ourſelves, even more than the apoſtles could at the time that Jeſus addreſſed this diſcourſe to them. For at that time they

they ſaw, and underſtood, very little; whereas we ſee every important ſubject clearly; the great doctrines of the goſpel, and the great end of it, in a ſtate of future retribution being fully revealed to us. Happy, indeed, will it be, if our conduct be anſwerable to the light we enjoy; but aggravated will be our condemnation, if it appear that we love darkneſs rather than this glorious light, becauſe our deeds are evil.

19. By the *evil one* may be underſtood any thing that is, or that tends to evil, eſpecially bad habits, and prejudices, which prevent any good impreſſion from the cleareſt inſtructions.

21. Here Jeſus deſcribes the caſe of thoſe who are ſo far free from bad habits and diſpoſitions, as to receive inſtruction very readily, but are not able to bear perſecution. They ſee and acknowledge what is their duty, but the love of life is ſtronger in them than the love of truth. Times of perſecution always diſcover great numbers to be in this ſtate.

22. Theſe are thoſe who, without perſecution, by the influence of the love of riches, and other worldly purſuits, abandon that faith and hope which they had acquired; and of theſe we have examples at all times, and on this account it greatly behoves us, eſpecially ſuch as are engaged in buſineſs, as well as ſuch as have no neceſſary employment, to be upon our guard. Much more real danger ariſes in theſe circumſtances than in thoſe of open perſecution. If adverſity, as is often ſaid, ſlays its thouſands, proſperity ſlays its ten thouſands.

All

All muſt claſs with thoſe who receive the good ſeed among thorns with whom the fear and love of God, and a regard to the precepts and promiſes of the goſpel, are not a *primary* object, having a real preference to any other, ſo that, if they were called to it, they would abandon every thing for them. Let us, then, aſk our hearts whether we could do this, or whether we do not ſuſpect that the love of the world and the things in it would prevent it.

23. This deſcription of men requires no explanation. I ſhall only obſerve that, of thoſe who properly receive the goſpel, and who will be intitled to the rewards of it, there are various degrees. All are not equally diſtinguiſhed by their regard for religion and virtue here, nor will they be ſo by their happineſs hereafter.

24. Jeſus in that part of his hiſtory to which our attention is now called, proceeds to deliver more parables, deſcriptive of the reception which the goſpel would meet with in the world. When we conſider that the term by which he here denotes the goſpel was *the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven*, and the ideas that the Jews had of that kingdom, we ſhall not wonder that what he ſaid, ſhould have been utterly unintelligible to his hearers. This kingdom, which they imagined to be the reign of a prince of the houſe of David over the Jewiſh nation, and the whole world, they might ſuppoſe to ariſe and extend itſelf gradually; but here it could be compared to ſeed ſown in the ground, ſome of it falling on the high-way, ſome upon ſtony ground, ſome among thorns, and ſome on good ground

ground, they could not poſſibly comprehend. And as little could they underſtand the parable of the tares of the field, which I now proceed to recite.

25. *Tares*;] Ζιζανια does not here mean a kind of pulſe, but ſome noxious weed.

In the former parable Jeſus had repreſented ſome of the ſeed of the word as falling among thorns, which prevented its taking root to any purpoſe. In this he ſpeaks of noxious weeds growing up along with the ſeed; but, as far as appears, not preventing its growth, but only occupying ſo much of the ground into which the good plants might have extended themſelves. This, therefore, is not a farther illuſtration of any thing contained in the former parable, but informs us that along with the pure goſpel, ſomething would ſpread in the world of an oppoſite nature, no more reſembling it than tares, or noxious weeds, reſemble wheat; but they will both occupy the ſame ground, and will continue to do ſo to the end of the world.

30. The two next parables are prophetical of the extenſive ſpread of the goſpel, which, tho' making no great appearance at firſt, would in time fill the whole earth.

Matt. XIII. 32. *The greatest of herbs.*] The muſtard is a large plant in the Eaſt. The Talmud mentions one that a man might ſit in with eaſe. See *Doddridge.*

33. At the time that Jeſus delivered theſe parables, there was no appearance of the prophecies they contain being fulfilled. The goſpel was hardly begun to be preached, not one of the diſciples of Jeſus had at that

any knowledge of the nature of it; and yet by means a ſyſtem of religion quite different from anything that was ever known before, was to be preached, and to overturn every ſpecies of falſe religion, which the inſtitutions of Moſes (which indeed had a different object) had not effected, and would at length, by its own evidence, eſtabliſh itſelf in all parts of the world. We ſee, however, this wonderful prophecy in a great meaſure fulfilled already, ſo that we cannot entertain any doubt of the accompliſhment of it in all its extent in due time, when in the language of the prophets, the *kingdom of this world will be the kingdom of Chriſt, and he will reign for ever and ever.*

35. By *the prophet* is here meant David or Aſaph, for it is a quotation from Ps. LXXVIII, 2. and a paſſage actually delivered by the pſalmiſt in his own name, without any view to future times. Here, then, we have another clear inſtance of the uſe of the term *fulfilled*, as ſynonymous to *applied*. For Jeſus could not mean any thing more than that what the pſalmiſt ſaid with reſpect to himſelf he could alſo adopt in his own caſe. In general, however, there cannot be any doubt but that by the term *fulfilled* the writers of the New Teſtament meant that there was an intended reference in the paſſages they quote to their own times.

SEC-

SECTION XXXII.

The Explanation of the Parable of the Tares, the Parables of the Treasure hid in a field, of a Merchant seeking pearls, and of a Net, and the reception of Jesus at Nazareth.

Matt. XIII. 36——58. Mark VI. 1.——6. Luke IV. 16——30.

38. WE see here that by *tares* is not to be understood any spurious kind of Christianity, which shall resemble it, tho' it may be so applied, but *bad men*, which the world will continue to produce as well as good.

43. According to this parable we are not to expect a complete separation of good and bad men to the end of the world, the day of judgment, or the last resurrection. This world is always to be a state of trial and discipline; so that whatever be meant by the *millenium*, or the reign of Christ upon earth, it will not be a state resembling what we are taught concerning heaven, or that which succeeds the resurrection of all the dead. Indeed, so long as men marry and have offspring, the children must be produced as they are now, in an imperfect state, exposed to temptation, and liable to vice; tho' in a more improved state of things, methods may be adopted to counteract their effects better than we are able to do at present. There will, no doubt, be a greater extension of the knowledge of the gospel, and

probably an univerſal profeſſion of it through all the world. But ſtill there will always be tares as well as wheat, tho' we may not be able to ſay, whence they will ariſe. Good principles are taught openly, but the introduction and influence of bad principles is often ſecret and ſilent, like theſe tares which were ſown *in the night, while men slept.* This will apply to the caſe of principles manifeſtly bad, and known to be incompatible with the goſpel. but much more to principles of a doubtful nature, maintained by their propoſers to be agreeable to the goſpel.

This parable affords a clear and ſtriking leſſon againſt all perſecution. Both the tares and the wheat are to grow together till the harveſt. No violence is to be uſed to extirpate the tares, leſt ſome injury be done to the wheat. The courſe of nature muſt be left to itſelf. But what men cannot, and ſhall not attempt to do here, will be done hereafter. Let us then ſee that we be of the good ſeed in this parable, and the good ground in the preceding, receiving the truth of the goſpel, firmly retaining it, and eſpecially acting upon it.

It is evident from this parable, as well as from the whole tenor of ſcripture, that there will be no reward of the righteous, or puniſhment of the wicked, till the general judgment. For we are here told that *the harveſt is the end of the world,* and that the ſon of man at his ſecond coming, will *send forth his angels to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity,* and that *then,* and not before he will order them to *be cast into the furnace of fire,* and that *then,*

and

and not before, *the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.* All our hopes and fears, therefore, should reſpect that *great day*, emphatically called *that day.*

55. *And his brethren.*] They were probably his *couſins*, the children of Cleopas, the brother of Joſeph, and of another Mary his wife.

57. *Is not without honour.*] This ſeems to be another caſe of Hebrew compariſon, Jeſus in fact was ill-treated elſewhere, and therefore it might be tranſlated *Is no where less esteemed than in his own country.*

58. *Because of their unbelief;*] i. e. becauſe they were not diſpoſed to be properly impreſſed by them, i. e. to admit them as evidence of his divine miſſion, but would put ſome other conſtruction upon them.

Mark VI. 5. This may be rendered *he thought not proper.* W.

Hitherto Jeſus kept at a diſtance from Nazareth, the place, as I think, of his birth, and as all allow, that where he was brought up from his earlieſt years. This place he ſeems purpoſely to have avoided, on his firſt arrival in Galilee, after the deſcent of the Spirit upon him, for a reaſon which we ſhall ſee abundantly juſtified on the preſent occaſion, viz. That a prophet is but little eſteemed in his own country. The reaſon is, that people having ſeen much of a perſon in very early life, and having known many childiſh things concerning him the idea of them is ſo connected with that of his perſon that they are never after entirely ſeparated. Having long known him to be not at all ſuperior to themſelves, they cannot readily think more highly of him than of themſelves,

and therefore require very ſtrong evidence of his ſuperior endowments; or if there be an evident ſuperiority, it excites jealouſy and envy, rather than reverence.

Jeſus being conſcious to himſelf that he would be expoſed to this treatment, is a proof that whatever intimation he might have had of his high deſtination in his early years, he had not aſſumed any thing in conſequence of it; ſo as to have kept himſelf at a diſtance from perſons of equal condition with himſelf, or to have behaved with any reſerve towards them. For had he never behaved with any familiarity among them who were his equals by birth, the idea which led them to make light of him would never have taken place in their minds. We may conclude therefore from the treatment that Jeſus met with at Nazareth, that he had not been diſtinguiſhed from men in his own rank of life in his ordinary behaviour; ſo that they who had played with him when he was a boy, and ſaw nothing extraordinary in him at that time, would not ſoon perſuade themſelves that any thing extraordinary had come to him afterwards.

This is an argument either that he had no early communications concerning his great future deſtination, or that he had very carefully concealed them, which gives us a high idea of his modeſty and ſelf command. Tho' the knowledge that was, no doubt, at the ſame time communicated to him concerning his future ſufferings, would tend to prevent that undue elation of mind, which otherwiſe would have been the neceſſary conſequence

of

of his being informed that he was to arrive at a ſtate of much greater dignity and power, than that of any other man.

16. It was not, you ſee, ſo much the cuſtom in the Jewiſh Synagogue for any particular perſon to read the ſcriptures, but that others might alſo do it. As young men, however, were not excluded from this office, which required nothing but decent behaviour and a good voice, it is poſſible that Jeſus might have been uſed to this duty ſometime before in the ſame ſynagogue. To this day the Jews ſtand up when the ſcriptures are read, out of reverence to them.

17. We ſee here that it was not the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moſes only, that was read by the Jews in their ſynagogues, but probably all the other books of the ſcripture, which have got the appellation of *canonical*, as thoſe of their books which were not read in the ſynagogues, we now call *apocryphal*, which therefore does not imply any cenſure, except that they were conſidered as not written by prophets.

18. *Because he has anointed me.*] Prideaux ſays that the Greek words do not exactly agree either with the Hebrew or the Septuagint of Iſaiah LXI, 1, 2. and therefore that the Jews at that time had probably ſome Chaldee Targum, which they uſed in the ſynagogue.

Deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind.] It is too much the cuſtom in the Eaſt to put out the eyes of captives and priſoners.

19 *The acceptable year of the Lord.*] Alluding to the year of Jubilee among the Jews, when all debts were

cancelled, and every perſon reſtored to the inheritance of his anceſtors

20. *Open the book* αναπτυξας, *and closed* πτυξας] i. e. when he had unfolded, and then folded it; the books of the ancients being written on long rolls of cloth, or parchment.

I have obſerved that ſitting was the uſual poſture of teachers among the Jews; ſo that Jeſus ſitting down after he had read, like his taking a ſeat on the mountain, and in the ſhip, was an intimation that he was going to ſpeak, in conſequence of which they were all attentive to what he was about to ſay. When Jeſus gave an account of himſelf before the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, he ſaid *I sat daily in the temple teaching.*

21. We cannot infer from this that the paſſage which our Lord quoted (which was Is. LXI. 1) had any original reference to his miniſtry; for we have juſt ſeen that he uſed the ſame phraſe in quoting another paſſage, in which the prophet evidently ſpoke concerning the people of his own time. So here it is ſufficient if Jeſus could in any proper ſenſe, adopt the words of the prophet, and apply them to himſelf and his own circumſtances. What Iſaiah here ſays relates to the future ſtate of the Jews, when they ſhould be reſtored to their own country, which, as the prophet ſays, would be glad tidings to the meek. He goes on to ſay that *they would build the old waste places, and raise up the former desolations, that they would repair the waste, the desolation of many generations*; which is moſt evidently deſcriptive of what is to take place at a future period. This Jeſus applied in a figurative ſenſe to the preaching

preaching of the goſpel by himſelf and his diſciples, this being a joyful or acceptable time, as well as the other that was yet to come.

22. From this it appears that Jeſus delivered himſelf in a manner much ſuperior to what was expected from him. The word ſignifies in *a graceful*, or pleaſing manner, not that he ever ſtudied eloquence, but that the manner of ſpeaking which is dictated by real affection and earneſtneſs, which his good will to his hearers would naturally inſpire, would have greater effect than the moſt ſtudied modes of addreſs.

From the offence that was taken at this diſcourſe, it is probable that Jeſus had enlarged on the importance of his character and commiſſion, as he had done on a former occaſion, when he called himſelf one *greater than Jonas*, and even than Solomon; and in this, as I have obſerved, there was great propriety, and nothing of oſtentation or vanity; and he might more naturally enlarge upon this ſubject in his own city, where the people would be apt to deſpiſe him, tho' when taken amiſs it would naturally enough provoke them, and cauſe them to reflect on the meanneſs of his deſcent, and every other circumſtance that would tend to bring him upon a level at leaſt with themſelves, if not place him below them.

Upon this occaſion we ſee that the people of Nazareth call Jeſus *the ſon of Joſeph*. It is evident therefore that the people of the place where he lived, had never heard of his miraculous birth. If they had, ill diſpoſed as they were towards him, they would not have

ſpared

ſpared ſuch reflections on himſelf and his mother as the unbelieving Jews have always had recourſe to with reſpect to it. But I do not enlarge upon this ſubject, as my opinion, and the reaſons of it, may be found in my writings. In what manner ſoever Jeſus came into the world, he was *sent by God*, he came with his commiſſion, and it is *this* that we are to reſpect.

27. *Elias*, is Elijah, and *Eliseus*, Eliſha.

Brow of the hill.] Nazareth, ſays Maundrel, is ſituated in a kind of round concave valley, on the top of a high hill.

We ſee here, as we may at this day, that when men's minds are irritated, every thing that can be urged in favour of truths, eſpecially if it imply any reproaches, as what Jeſus ſaid on this occaſion evidently did, only exaſperates. It does not appear that the people of this place doubted Jeſus's power of working miracles, but he did not chuſe to work any, at leaſt not many (for one of the evangeliſts ſays *he laid his hands on a few sick persons and healed them*) in that town or neighbourhood, which they would naturally think he ought to have preferred to any other, tho' he had the beſt reaſons for not doing it; and becauſe he ſaid nothing that was flattering or ſoothing to them, and rather reproached them for want of due reſpect to him, they were ſo much offended that they even attempted his life.

30. Perhaps in the confuſion in which they were, Jeſus might make his eſcape without exerting any miraculous power, which we may aſſure ourſelves he would not do unneceſſarily, eſpecially in his own favour.

Luke

PARAPHRASE.

Luke IV, 23. &c. You are not pleaſed that I do not here ſuch mighty works as you have heard that I performed at Capernaum and other places, and are applying to me the the old proverb, *Physician heal thyſelf.* Serve yourſelves and your friends, you ſay, in the firſt place. But I am well aware that this would anſwer no good purpoſe. Your having known me from my infancy, prejudices you ſo ſtrongly againſt my having any pretenſions ſuperior to thoſe of other men, as will effectually prevent your being impreſſed by my miracles as you ought to be. And indeed it is true in general, that a prophet is ſeldom much eſteemed in his own country. But it is no new thing, in the diſpenſations of providence, that prophets ſhould be directed to beſtow on ſtrangers the favours of which their own countrymen were unworthy. This was remarkably the caſe in the time of Elijah and Eliſha.

SECTION XXXIII.

The Miſſion of the Twelve Apoſtles, and their Inſtructions.

Matt. IX. 35——38. X. 1——42. Mark VI. 7——13. Luke IX. 1——6. XII. 1——9——11. 12 49——53.

UPON Jeſus being rejected at Nazareth, we do not read of any attempt that he afterwards made to

to preach in that place. The time of his public miniſtry was very ſhort, and therefore he left that city, and preached in other neigbouring towns, in the weſtern part of Galilee, where he had not been before, and where we ſhall find him attended by as great crouds as had followed him at Capernaum and other cities in the eaſt ernpart of this country.

36. We have here another inſtance of the affectionate temper of Jeſus, he could not ſee the multitude which crowded after him, and whom, being alone, he was not able fully to inſtruct without viſible marks of compaſſion, ſo that the idea of ſheep wandering without a ſhepherd naturally occurred to his mind: and this ſituation of things ſeems to have ſuggeſted to him the expedient of ſending out his twelve apoſtles, who were now ſufficiently inſtructed for the purpoſe, to go and preach in thoſe places where he could not be preſent himſelf.

Ch. X. 1. The Apoſtles, you ſee, had the very ſame power that Jeſus himſelf was poſſeſſed of. This reſembles the caſe of Moſes of whom we read, Deuteronomy xxxiv. 9. that he *laid his hands upon Joshua and he was filled with the spirit of wisdom*, and indeed, by the laying on of the hands of the apoſtles themſelves, the holy ſpirit was given to their diſciples. This circumſtance, therefore, implies no divine power in Jeſus, any more than it did in Moſes, or the apoſtles; but the ſame power that God had imparted to Jeſus, he authorized Jeſus to impart to the apoſtles. This agrees with what our Lord ſays in his prayer, *as thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world.* For ſending

ſending them out with this commiſſion, was ſending them into the world, not out of another world into this, but into more public life, to act a diſtinguiſhed part on the great theatre of the world.

6. To leave the Jews without excuſe, by not unneceſſarily hurting their prejudice, it pleaſed God that the commiſſion of Jeſus himſelf ſhould be confined to the Jews, as was alſo that of the apoſtles for about ten years after the reſurrection of Jeſus. Jeſus however, gave ſufficient intimation of his deſign to bring other ſheep into his fold by preaching in one of the towns of Samaria, and by exerting his miraculous powers in favour of a woman of Canaan.

7. It is obſervable that the twelve apoſtles were not, upon this miſſion, to publiſh that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, probably leſt it ſhould give alarm to the Jews or Romans. The burden of their preaching was only that the *kingdom of God was at hand.*

It was not, however, that kingdom of God which the Jews were looking for, and in which they ſuppoſed the Meſſiah would preſide. This kingdom of God does not properly commence till the reſurrection, and day of judgment, when Chriſt will come as a king, in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, as he is deſcribed in the prophecy of Daniel. What takes place in this world by the preaching of the Goſpel is only ſomething preparatory to this. It is forming proper ſubjects for this kingdom, and in this ſenſe our Lord's kingdom may be ſaid to take place in this world; but it is not its original and proper ſenſe.

8 The

8. The clauſe *raiſe the dead* is not in all MSS. and becauſe we have no account of any perſon being raiſed from the dead by the apoſtles, during this particular miſſion, it has been ſuppoſed by ſome that Matthew did not write this clauſe. But if the whole of this diſcourſe be conſidered, it will be found that ſeveral parts of it relate to the general miſſion of the apoſtles, after the aſcenſion of Jeſus: and as this evangeliſt choſe to introduce in the ſermon on the Mount the ſubſtance of all our Lord's moral inſtructions, ſo in this he ſeems to have introduced every thing that he could recollect of the inſtructions and advice that Jeſus had at any time given the apoſtles with reſpect to their conduct in preaching the goſpel, even after his death. For certainly they were not before that time brought before magiſtrates, or expoſed to any kind of perſecution, of which their maſter here appriſes them.

By "*freely ye have received, freely give,*" we are to underſtand that the apoſtles were to be as liberal of their inſtructions, or of any benefit which by their miraculous power they could confer upon any perſon, as Jeſus himſelf had been; freely imparting them to all that could receive benefit from them. Theſe words were by no means intended to aſſert, what the Quakers have ſuppoſed them to do, viz. that the miniſters of the goſpel ſhould receive no compenſation for their labours. Jeſus himſelf was maintained by the voluntary contributions of his friends. Immediately after this, he ſays, that the *workman is worthy of his meat*, and the apoſtle Paul expreſsly, ſays that *they who preach the goſpel ſhould live by the Goſpel.*

that

This, indeed, is no more than one caſe in many which come under this general rule, viz. that perſons employed by others, for whatever ſervice, ſhould receive an equivalent for their time and labour, and of courſe be indemnified for the expence of whatever education it may have been requiſite to qualify them for their office. It is evident that the miniſters of the goſpel are in this reſpect in the ſame ſituation with phyſicians, and others who give their time to any particular profeſſion, who are in fact the ſervants of thoſe by whom they are employed.

If any, like the apoſtle Paul, be by any means independent of their ſalaries as miniſters, and voluntarily give their time and labour to what they deem to be the cauſe of truth and of virtue, thoſe to whoſe benefit they thus devote their labours, are under the ſame obligation to them, as they would be to phyſician, who would give them his advice *gratis*. And the recompence that ſuch perſons do not expect from men, they will no doubt, receive *at the reſurrection of the juſt*, when they *who ſhall have turned many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever*.

9. *Girdles.*] The people of the Eaſt carry their money in a fold of their girdles.

10, *Neither two coats, neither ſhoes, neither ſtaves.*] i. e. no change of any of theſe things, or nothing more than was neceſſary for immediate uſe; which agrees with the charge in Mark, when they were allowed to have a ſtaff.

11 *In-*

11. *Inquire who in it is worthy.*] i. e. with whom it will be moſt convenient for you to lodge, on account of their liberal turn of mind, or their good character.

This reliance upon divine providence, without any care of their own, was, no doubt, recommended to the apoſtles only, whoſe commiſſion was of an extraordinary nature. Beſides, as their whole time was taken up in travelling from place to place, and in preaching, they could have no opportunity of making any proviſion for their ſubſiſtence. Paul, however, when he had reſided ſometime at Corinth, had recourſe to his trade of a tent maker, and ſupported himſelf by that means. In the preſent ordinary courſe of things, all perſons, miniſters as well as others, ſhould provide for their ſubſiſtance in ſome reſpectable manner; and if the proper duties of their office will not enable them to do this, they ſhould join with it ſome other employment, and if poſſible ſuch as may be nearly connected with their proper employment, eſpecially that of the inſtruction of youth.

They were to enquire who was moſt likely to be benefited by their inſtructions, and to receive them with the reſpect to which they were intitled, viz. the teachable and liberal; becauſe it could anſwer no end to apply to others. We are not to caſt pearls before ſwine: On this occaſion the apoſtles were not to go from houſe to houſe, as if in queſt of better or more various entertainment, but be content with a decent proviſion wherever they ſhould meet with it.

15. All who hear the preaching of the goſpel enjoy greater moral advantages than the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorah could derive from the diſcourſes or exam-

examples of Lot; and on that account their guilt in refuſing admonition muſt be greater, and their future condemnation proportionably heavier.

16. Jeſus having inſtructed his apoſtles what to ſay and what to do on this miſſion, and how they were to equip themſelves for it, proceeds to give them farther inſtructions how to conduct themſelves with reſpect to the difficulties to which they would be expoſed. But it is very eaſy to perceive that the difficulties here mentioned were not likely to occur in this ſhort excurſion, and therefore muſt relate to a future period.

18. The apoſtles certainly were not brought before any governors or kings, on this ſhort miſſion.

20. If we conſider the actual behaviour of the apoſtles when they were brought before courts of juſtice, we ſhall ſee no reaſon to imagine that they were inſpired by any thing more than a conſciouſneſs of their innocence, and the goodneſs of the cauſe in which they were engaged. Paul on one occaſion expreſſed himſelf with a degree of warmth for which he thought proper to make an apology, ſaying that he did not know that the perſon before whom he ſpoke was the High-prieſt. This, therefore, could not be the behaviour of a man under proper divine inſpiration. Probably, therefore, all that our Lord intended was that his diſciples did not need to diſtreſs themſelves at the apprehenſion of being brought before the moſt awful tribunals (which, conſidering the low birth and education of moſt of them, might naturally inſpire them with terror) for that when their trial came, they would find themſelves at no loſs how to conduct themſelves; ſince the cauſe

in which they were engaged, which was of God, would not fail to ſuggeſt to them what they ſhould ſay. All prophecies are beſt interpreted by the events, and if we find leſs in the event than in the prediction, we make Jeſus a falſe prophet.

22. How different was this from the expectations with which the apoſtles became the followers of Jeſus! they thought that he would ſoon be a king, and that he would lead them to conqueſt and triumph, and not to death. It is probable, therefore, that had he delivered this doctrine in ſo early a period of his miniſtry as Matthew here places it, they would have revolted at it, and therefore that this part of the diſcourſe was not delivered on this particular occaſion, but later in the hiſtory. We cannot help obſerving here, how exact was our Lord's foreknowledge of the reception which his doctrine would meet with in the world, and of the great evils of which it would be the innocent cauſe. But there is no great good in the whole courſe of nature, without ſome evil inſeparable from it.

23. The duty of chriſtians is to avoid perſecution, if it can be done innocently, as by avoiding a place where a perſon would be expoſed to it. But it is the expreſs condition on which we claim the rewards of chriſtianity, to adhere to the profeſſion of it at the riſk of every thing dear to us in life; and of life itſelf, if we be called to it, i. e. if there be no alternative beſides confeſſing Chriſt before men, or denying him.

There is a great difficulty in this paſſage, "The coming of the Son of Man," I cannot help thinking, is

no

no other than his coming to raiſe the dead, and judge the world. But admitting he might be ſaid *to come*, at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, as if he then took vengeance on his enemies, the apoſtles had certainly done much more than going through all the cities of Iſrael, before that time, the whole country being of no greater extent in any direction than a perſon might walk through in about a week; and the deſtruction of Jeruſalem did not happen till forty years after our Saviour's death. If Jeſus did expreſs himſelf in this manner (but I would obſerve that it is only in one evangeliſt that the expreſſion is found) he muſt, as far as appears, have apprehended that his ſecond coming was much nearer than it really was. This, however, is no great difficulty; ſince he himſelf acknowledged that the time of his ſecond coming was known to the Father only, and not to himſelf, ſo that he was left to his own conjectures on that ſubject.

25. In this Jeſus teaches his diſciples not to complain of their ſufferings, as peculiarly hard, when their maſter had been expoſed to the ſame before them.

28. There is no paſſage in ſcripture, of the Old or New Teſtament, that ſeems to teach the doctrine of a *ſoul* as diſtinct from the body more clearly than this does. And yet I am perſuaded that Jeſus had no ſuch idea, as neither on this, nor any other occaſion, does he intimate that theſe two ſuppoſed parts of man were ſeparated, ſo that the ſoul could feel, or do, any thing without the body, which, according to the common notion, it is certainly capable of.

As Jeſus had probably heard nothing of the heathen Philoſophy, in which the doctrine of a ſoul is a diſtinguiſhed article, we may ſuppoſe, that he alludes to the account which Moſes gives of the creation of man, who firſt ſays that God formed *man* (not his body only, but every thing that conſtitutes *the man*) *of the duſt of the earth*, and that he then *breathed into him the breath of life*, that is put all the parts into proper motion, by the power of *breathing*, ſo as to animate the ſenſeleſs frame, the power of perception and thought being the neceſſary conſequences of this *animation*; and as theſe powers came, they would of courſe ceaſe with the powers of *breathing* or *life*. The term which is here rendered *ſoul* is commonly rendered *life*. Thus when Jeſus ſays, Matthew vi, 25. *take no thought for your life*, if the ſame word had been rendered as it is here, it would have been *take no thought for your ſoul*; for in the original the words are the very ſame.

Conſequently, what our Lord meant to ſay was, that God can not only puniſh a man in a ſtate after this, but even deprive him of *life* or *exiſtence*, there; inflicting that puniſhment which is elſewhere called the *ſecond death*, whereas the power of man extends to the *preſent life* only. Agreable to this doctrine, Chriſt ſays that he gives to his diſciples *eternal life*, and it is ſaid *they ſhall die no more*. Whereas, though it is ſaid that the wicked are to riſe again as well as the righteous, it is not ſaid that it is to a ſtate in which they ſhall never die again. On this ſubject we are, no doubt, very wiſely left in the dark. Our Saviour here

here aſſerts the power of God to deprive man of exiſtence in a future ſtate. Whether this power be executed or not, about which he does not determine, let us be careful we be not of thoſe who will be expoſed to it.

31. Another topic of encouragement our Lord derives from the univerſal providence of God, which, no doubt, extends to the preachers of the goſpel, eſpecially ſuch preachers as the apoſtles were. Nothing could befal them that was not intended by God, and, therefore intended for the beſt; and in this it was their duty to acquieſce.

33. Here, as I obſerved before, we ſee the condition, on which alone we can claim the rewards of the goſpel. If we wiſh to *reign* with Chriſt, we muſt not decline to *ſuffer* with him, and for him, if at any time we be called to it; and it behoves us well to examine ourſelves and conſider what we could be able to renounce, or to bear, in his cauſe.

If we conſider the great prize for which we contend, that *life and immorality* are ſet before us, we cannot think that we can ſacrifice too much to it, tho' we ſhould be required to abandon life, and all the enjoyments of it. We are, in reality, no chriſtians, except *in name*, unleſs chriſtianity be the primary object with us, and every thing elſe be a ſecondary purſuit. And they who think they can give their time, their talents, and their heart to the world, and ſeldom think of any thing elſe, and yet imagine they may ſecure the happineſs of heaven after all, will find that they miſerably deceive themſelves. This is the reaſon why our

Lord ſays, *it is eaſier for a cable to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*, becauſe riches naturally engage much of a man's thoughts, care, and affection, and leave him little time to attend to better things. Indeed the rich ſeldom think that there are any better things than riches, even tho' they never find themſelves happy or ſatisfied with them. On the contrary, a true chriſtian will take more thought how to ſpend his wealth properly than to add to it. By this rule then let us try ourſelves.

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace.*] Here our Lord foretels what would be the *actual conſequence* of preaching his religion in the world, before the general reception of it, which would bring on a final ſtate of peace and happineſs.

36. On this topic our Lord had ſpoken before, ſo that theſe inſtructions were delivered, or at leaſt put down by the evangeliſt, without any ſtrict regard to method. Alſo what follows next, relates to what had been ſaid a little before.

42. The antients were fond of drinking their liquors warm. It was even the cuſtom to ſell warm water, ſo that a cup of cold water was the ſmalleſt of all favours. MARTIN.

Mark, VI, 8. In Matt. x, 10, the apoſtles are directed not to take even a ſtaff. The meaning ſeems to have been, that they were to go without any particular preparation. If they happened to have a ſtaff in their hand, they were to proceed with it; if not, to go without one.

Mark

Mark VI. 13. *Anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.*] It was an antient Hebrew cuſtom, ſays Grotius, both to lay hands upon, and anoint with oil, perſons for whom prayers were made, by way of expreſſing their wiſhes, that God would give them joy and gladneſs (denoted by oil) inſtead of affliction. This cuſtom, as appears by James v. 14. continued ſome time in the chriſtian church.

Luke XII, 29. *What will I, if it be already kindled.*] Pearce would render it, *What will I? I wish that it was already kindled*, i. e. It is my deſire and wiſh, that my doctrine had already taken place, though attended with this diſagreable circumſtance.

50. *I have a baptism, to be baptized with* ;] Alluding to his death, in which he was, as it were to be plunged. This metaphorical expreſſion frequently occurs in the New Teſtament.

SECTION XXXIV.

The Diſcourse concerning John, and the upbraiding of Chorazin, &c.

Matt. XI. 1——30. Luke VII. 18——35. XVI. 16. X. 13——16.

WE now, for the firſt time after the election of the twelve apoſtles, find Jeſus alone, they being gone upon their miſſion to the neighbouring towns of Galilee, where he himſelf could not conveniently attend; and here people of various deſcriptions reſort to

him as uſual. But the moſt remarkable circumſtance that here occurs, is a meſſage from John the Baptiſt, who was then in priſon, a very ſhort time before his death.

3. It has generally been ſuppoſed that John ſent theſe meſſengers with ſome other view than to procure ſatisfaction for himſelf. But this ſuppoſition was only ſuggeſted by the idea, that John himſelf muſt neceſſarily have known that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, to announce *this* having been, as they imagine the ſpecial object of his miſſion. But the due conſideration of this meſſage, together with many other circumſtances in the goſpel hiſtory, ſatisfied Mr. Palmer, that John himſelf was not apprized of the Meſſiahſhip of Jeſus, but was only commiſſioned to ſignify that he was a greater prophet than himſelf; and as John denied that he was *Elias*, it is evident that he did not know that he ſuſtained that character, and might poſſibly think that Jeſus was the perſon. But hearing of the fame of his miracles, which led many others to ſuſpect that he was nothing leſs than the Meſſiah, he himſelf appears to have begun to think the ſame; and for his own ſatisfaction, as well as that of others, he ſent theſe meſſengers. Here I would obſerve that John's ignorance of the Meſſiahſhip of Jeſus is a clear proof that they did not act in concert, and conſequently an argument for the divine miſſion of them both.

5. It is remarable that Jeſus had not publicly acknowledged himſelf to be the Meſſiah, but left others to form their judgments from his works, and to theſe he contents himſelf with referring John. But to aſſiſt his

his judgment, he recapitulates his miracles, which John might compare with what was ſaid, or ſuppoſed to be ſaid, concerning the Meſſiah, by the antient prophets, and he quotes ſeveral expreſſions which are to be found in Iſaiah, particularly Ch. xxxv, 5. 6. But as no mention is there made of the *cleaning of lepers*, or of *raiſing the dead*, it is not probable that he meant to make an expreſs quotation, of which indeed he gives no intimation.

Tho' the prophecies to which Jeſus here refers are, in many reſpects, obſcure, they clearly point out a glorious time to come, a *kingdom of righteousness*, under ſome diſtinguiſhed perſon, appointed by God for that purpoſe. They uſe a language very unlike any of the heathen writers, and this is the caſe not of Iſaiah only, but of many other prophets in a long ſucceſſion. This remarkable difference is eaſily accounted for, on the ſuppoſition of theſe prophets having had divine communications, but not on any other hypotheſis.

6. i. e. Happy are they who can firmly believe that I am the Meſſiah, from comparing my works with the antient prophecies, without being ſtaggered by thoſe circumſtances in my appearance, which are generally ſuppoſed to be incompatible with that character, particularly my not aſſuming the title of a king.

9. As John was a perſon who had drawn upon himſelf the favourable attention of almoſt the whole Jewiſh nation, Jeſus took this opportunity, which he had not done before, of ſpeaking concerning him and his character. He firſt ſuggeſts that they did not crowd after

him into the wilderneſs to ſee a common ſight, ſuch as reeds which are in every deſert place; nor yet ſuch a perſon as they could not well expect to find there, as a courtier, ſuch as are to be found in king's houſes. It was certainly therefore, ſome perſon of a very great, but of a very different character, that they expected to find, viz. a *prophet*. This he now aſſures them that John was, and to raiſe their idea of him he adds *more than a prophet*, i. e. a perſon whoſe commiſſion was of more conſequence than that of moſt, if not any, of the preceding prophets. For we are not obliged by this declaration of Jeſus to ſuppoſe that John was, in all reſpects, ſuperior to Moſes, Elijah, or the other of the more diſtinguiſhed prophets of ancient time. For as he wrought no miracles, he was in this reſpect at leaſt inferior to them.

10. To give the people a greater and juſter idea of the character of John, Jeſus informs them that he was the perſon intimated in the prophecy of Malachi, Ch. iii, 1, &c. *Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare my way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple. Even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold he shall come saith the Lord of hosts, but who shall abide the day of his coming*, &c. Here the perſon who is ſimply ſtiled *the Lord's messenger*, ſeems to be John the baptiſt, but *the Lord whom ye seek*, called alſo *the messenger of the covenant*, who was to come ſuddenly, or unexpectedly, is probably the Meſſiah himſelf. And it is farther probable that from this paſſage the Jews learned to characterize the Meſſiah by the title, "*he who should come*."

come." Hence the phraſe that John uſes, "*Art thou he that ſhould come.*"

11. Tho' John, as immediately preceding the Meſſiah, was a more important perſon than any of the preceding prophets, yet the diſciples of Chriſt having more knowledge, and ſome of them communicating it with more effect, may be ſaid to be greater than he, and that by *greater* our Lord meant more powerful in making converts to truth and righteouſneſs, ſeems to be evident from his illuſtration.

12. By the preaching of John great numbers were brought to be proper ſubjects of the Meſſiah's kingdom. This work is ſtill going on, and ſo many ſubjects are now making, and as it were preſſing into the kingdom of God, that it may be ſaid *to ſuffer violence, or to be taken by force.*

13. The diſpenſation of the law and the prophets may be ſaid to have terminated at the appearance of John, who was inveſted with a new character, and with which commenced a new æra in the diſpenſations of God to man.

15. As John did not know himſelf to be Elias, it is no wonder that the people did not receive him in that character, and therefore Jeſus mentions it as a thing they would not receive without difficulty, ſaying, *and if ye will receive it.* To this he demands their more particular attention. For if John was Elias, he himſelf muſt, no doubt, be the Meſſiah. This, however, he did not chuſe expreſsly to declare, but left others to infer, tho' there was no difficulty in drawing the inference, but only admitting the premiſes, or the doctrine

of

of John being Elias, and he is mentioned in that character Malachi iv, 5, "Behold I will ſend you Elijah "the prophet before the coming of the great and dread-"ful day of the Lord."

16. Jeſus here alludes to the cuſtom of children, who in the Eaſt, and with us, and in all parts of the world have plays in imitation of the actions of men, and the cuſtoms of the Jews and other eaſtern nations at marriages and funerals are particularly remarkable, both being accompanied with inſtruments of muſic. The children here alluded to had mock ceremonies of this kind, and they are repreſented as complaining of their companions for not joining with them, ſo that whether they imitated a rejoicing or a mourning, they could not pleaſe them. The Jews were theſe children, finding fault both with the rigour of John the Baptiſt, and the more eaſy manners of Jeſus.

19. Having repreſented John and himſelf as both coming with the divine miſſion, he ſpeaks of the unreaſonable cavils of the Phariſees, who objected to them both for oppoſite reaſons. John lived an auſtere life, and made his firſt appearance in a deſert. They therefore ſaid that he was a demoniac, or a perſon out of his right mind. Jeſus, on the contrary lived in ſociety, and conformed to the innocent modes of it, and on that account they ſaid that he was ſo far from being a prophet, that he was a *free liver;* ſo that it was impoſſible to give them ſatisfaction. But Jeſus adds wiſdom, or the wiſdom of God is juſtified by her children, i. e. it appears in the different conduct of both John and himſelf, in their acting differently, according to their different

different circumſtances, and thoſe who attended to divine wiſdom, and might therefore be called the *ſons of wiſdom* would ſee and admire it.

20. Jeſus, addreſſing himſelf to the multitude in the abſence of his diſciples, and after the departure of the meſſengers of John, having complained of the unreaſonable prejudice of the Phariſees in rejecting both John and himſelf, and for quite oppoſite reaſons, (which proves that in both caſes they were mere cavillers, and that if the reaſons alledged had not occurred to them, others would have been invented) proceeds to mention the caſe of ſome particular cities in Galilee, which had enjoyed the benefit of his preaching, without making a proper uſe of it, i. e. without repenting of their ſins, and forſaking them, which was the great object of his preaching and miracles.

You will obſerve, that the object of the ſevere cenſures on the inhabitants of ſome particular cities, which follow, were not their refuſing to receive Jeſus as the Meſſiah, tho' they might have inferred it from his miracles, and other circumſtances attending him, but merely becauſe they did not repent, which they had been repeatedly called upon, both by John the Baptiſt and himſelf to do. The great burden of all their preaching was *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; and tho' the people in general admitted the divine miſſion of John, and could not deny the miracles of Jeſus, which in the fulleſt manner proved his own divine miſſion, their faith had not produced its proper effect in leading them to reform their lives, without

which

which they could not be proper ſubjects of that kingdom of heaven, which was announced to them.

21. It is remarkable that we have no account of Jeſus having ever viſited either Chorazin or Bethſaida. But it may well be ſuppoſed that he did it in his abſence from Capernaum, after curing the Demoniac and Peter's wife's mother in that city, and during he ſame excurſion in which he delivered the ſermon on the mount. Beſides, as this ſermon was delivered in the neighbourhood of all thoſe cities, and the inhabitans of many of them were, no doubt preſent on the occaſion, we may conſider that excellent moral diſcourſe as delivered to them all, and wherever Jeſus came he taught the ſame doctrine, and gave the ſame exhortations.

That the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon would actually have repented, if they had heard and ſeen the ſame things with thoſe of Chorazin and Bethſaida, Jeſus muſt have ſaid upon preſumption. We have no account of any prophet having been ever ſent to thoſe cities, but it might be preſumed that if they had, they would have repented, as the inhahitants of Nineveh did in the like caſe.

24. If the condemnation of theſe cities was ſo great, on account of their not repenting at the preaching of Jeſus, before his divine miſſion was ſo abundantly confirmed as it has been ſince, what muſt ours be, if we do not improve the ſuperior advantages which we now enjoy. The glad tidings of the goſpel had only been juſt heard by theſe people, and they had hardly had time to reflect upon them. Jeſus had not wrought miracles many weeks; he had not died, and riſen from the dead;

dead; and what is more, the goſpel had not received that abundant confirmation which it afterwards did from the preaching of the apoſtles, and from its overcoming all the oppoſition from the powers of the world, which it required ſome centuries to accompliſh. None of the goſpels, or any other books of the New Teſtament were then written. But, we have theſe books, and are acquainted with the preaching of the apoſtles, and the ſucceſs of it; ſo that no reaſonable doubt can remain upon our minds, if we ſeriouſly reflect on the ſubject. What, then, will be our condemnation, if we do not give ſuitable attention to the momentous truths which we hear every day, and do not govern our lives by them. As the apoſtle ſays, *how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great a ſalvation.*

25. We are not to ſuppoſe that Jeſus was really thankful that God had not revealed the truths of the goſpel to the wiſe, but that, on the ſuppoſition of their being rejected by them, they were made known to thoſe who might be ſtiled *babes.* It is an expreſſion ſimilar to that of Paul, Rom. vi, 17, *God be thanked that ye were ſervants of ſin, but now ye have obeyed from the heart, the form of doctrine delivered unto you.* That is, I thank God that tho' ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye have now repented, and received the goſpel.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XI. 25. I admire the wiſdom of thy providence, O thou ſovereign diſpoſer of all things, that, in the courſe of it, the goſpel ſhould be received by men who are held in contempt by thoſe who are famed

med for their wiſdom and prudence in the world; as the goſpel will thereby have leſs the appearance of being a ſcheme of worldly policy, countenanced by the powers of this world, and therefore will appear more credible, and more probable to have come from God, in ant ages.

27. All things that relate to the reception and propagation of the goſpel are delivered to me by my Father. He only is perfectly acquainted with the full extent of my commiſſion, with what is requiſite for the ſucceſs of it, and what will be the final reſult of it, here and hereafter. And it is his will that the true knowledge and worſhip of himſelf in all future ages, ſhould be communicated to mankind by means of my goſpel; all the reſt of the world being ſunk in groſs ignorance and idolatry.

28. This knowledge of the true God I am deſirous of communicating to all, and it is peculiarly comfortable and reviving to thoſe who are oppreſſed with the ſenſe of their ignorance and guilt. All ſuch, without exception, I invite to come to me that they may find true reſt and peace in the belief of the goſpel, and in the practice of the duties which it enjoins. The burdens that I ſhall impoſe upon you are lighter than thoſe of Moſes. The duties that I preſcribe, will promote your preſent as well as your future happineſs. It is not my diſpoſition, or my wiſh, to impoſe any other.

SEC-

SECTION XXXV.

Jesus eats with Simon the Pharisee.

Luke VII. 36——50.

JESUS had obſerved with reſpect to himſelf, that his uſual deportment was different from that of John the Baptiſt. John had come as he ſays, *neither eating nor drinking*, but lived in the deſert, an auſtere life, his garments coarſe, and his diet plain, like the ancient prophets; whereas he himſelf *came eating and drinking*, i. e. affecting no ſingularity, but living in ſociety, and not declining the ſocial enjoyments of life. Accordingly we find him occaſionally at public entertainments, as at a marriage feaſt, where he wrought his firſt miracle, we have another inſtance of the kind, viz. his acceptance of the invitation of a Phariſee to dine with him, and as ſeveral of the friends of this Phariſee were alſo preſent, and probably four Lord's diſciples, this alſo might be called a *feaſt*.

37. This city was certainly in Galilee, for Jeſus was not yet gone to Judea, and therefore this Mary could not, as ſome have ſuppoſed be Mary the ſiſter of Lazarus, who was of Bethany, near Jeruſalem. Nor is it at all probable that it was Mary Magdalen. For we never read of her being a *ſinner*, i. e. a woman of a notoriouſly bad life, but only that ſhe had had *ſeven demons*, i. e. had been much diſordered in her mind, or afflicted with madneſs, a diſorder in which Jeſus had relieved her.

38. Theſe expreſſions are all of the greateſt reverence, and the deepeſt humility. An alabaſter box, means a box that has no handle, being ſmall enough to be held in the hand without that aſſiſtance. Theſe boxes were often made with great art, and of coſtly materials, being deſigned to hold things of particular value; and there is ſcarcely any thing which perſons in the eaſtern countries covet more than ſweet ſcented ointments, both the oil and the fragrance being peculiarly refreſhing. This ointment was generally poured upon the head, as was done by Mary of Bethany; but this woman, to ſhew her reſpect and humility at the ſame time, anointed the feet of Jeſus, after having waſhed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.

The antients made a point of wiping the tears of thoſe they loved with their hair. MARTIN.

39. We ſee here the cavilling diſpoſition of the Phariſee, in which he reſembled the generality of his ſect, with reſpect to Jeſus. Jeſus had already given abundant proof of his being a prophet, and yet becauſe he did not decline the civilities of this woman, he concluded that he was no prophet. A prophet does not know all things, but only ſuch as God ſhall be pleaſed to reveal to him. But if Jeſus had known the character of this woman, the Phariſee might have ſuppoſed, what we ſhall to ſee to have been actually the caſe, that Jeſus had good reaſons for permitting her to do as ſhe did.

It is plain from the Phariſee's concluding that Jeſus was no prophet, that he was not ſuppoſed to have pretended

tended to be God. There would then, indeed, have been more appearance of reaſon in what he ſaid, becauſe God muſt know all things.

43. This parable was well adapted to excuſe the violent manner in which this woman was affected. It indicated the extreme anguiſh of her mind, and a deep ſenſe of her guilt and unworthineſs, which fully intitled her to forgiveneſs.

45. Meaning kiſſing the hand, which is the general token of reſpect in the Eaſt, and which between equals is always returned. Alſo waſhing the feet, and anointing the head, are the firſt civilities paid to a gueſt in the Eaſt. The ſame cuſtom prevailed in Greece. Perhaps this Phariſee had omitted the uſual tokens of reſpect, in the reception of Jeſus, rather than offend his brethren, as he might have invited Jeſus for the ſake of cavilling with, or expoſing him. If this was the caſe, he well deſerved the reproof that was given him.

48. We are not to ſuppoſe this woman's ſin's were forgiven, on account of the love or affection ſhe expreſſed to the perſon of Chriſt; but for her penitent diſpoſition, which ſhe had before, and which led her to act in this manner. Her behaviour was only an expreſſion of what was before in her heart. Accordingly Jeſus afterwards ſaith, *Thy faith hath ſaved thee*, and by *faith* is to be underſtood every right diſpoſition of the mind towards God, not merely a belief of what he ſays, or what he promiſes; tho' one of theſe promiſes is that of forgiveneſs to the truly penitent, without which there would be no encouragement to repent.

49. It is evident from this, as well as from what paſſed on a former occaſion, that there was ſomething new, and peculiarly offenſive, ſomething that appeared arrogant in this mode of expreſſion. It was at leaſt ſomething at which the Phariſees could more eaſily cavil; but in reality there is nothing more implied in pronouncing that a perſon's ſins are forgiven by the mercy of God, than that he was cured of any diſorder by the power of God. A prophet may be equally authoriſed to declare both. It is aſſuming nothing to himſelf, but only ſpeaking in the name of God, and delivering what we may ſuppoſe was ſuggeſted to him on the occaſion.

50. What impreſſion our Lord's behaviour and diſcourſe made on theſe Phariſees we are not told. It is probable that, agreably to the character and conduct of the generality of their ſect, they were not conciliated by it, but perhaps rendered more obdurate.

SECTION XXXVI.

The Death of John the Baptiſt.

Matt. XIV. 1——13. Mark VI. 14——29. Luke IX. 7——9.

PRESENTLY after Jeſus appeared in the character of a public teacher, John the Baptiſt was apprehended by Herod the Tetrarch, and committed to priſon, but probably without any intention of putting him to death. We have now an account of the manner in which that event was brought about, and of the conduct

conduct of Jeſus on the occaſion. This Herod was the ſon of Herod the great, and upon the diviſion of his territories into four parts called *Tetrarchies* by the Romans, one of theſe parts named Galilee, being given to this Herod, he got the title of *Tetrarch*. Another fourth part of Herod's dominion was aſſigned to Philip, the brother of Herod; another to Lyſanias, and the laſt and principal part, viz. Judea, was governed by a Roman procurator, who was now Pontius Pilate.

2. It is evident that as the fame of Jeſus working miracles quickly ſpread through all Galilee, it muſt have ſoon reached Herod who was king of the country, and ſince he had not heard of his miracles till after the death of John, and then took him to be the ſame perſon with John, it is impoſſible that Jeſus could have preached and have worked miracles a long time before that event. I ſuppoſe it might have been a very few weeks, which appears to me to have been abundantly ſufficient for all the buſineſs that we find to fill them. Upon the ſuppoſition of our Lord's public miniſtry having continued more than three years, about two of them muſt have elapſed before the impriſonment of John (about which time Jeſus was arrived in Galilee) and Herod's hearing of him, which is in the higheſt degree improbable; eſpecially as it is evident from hiſtory that Herod was in the country all the time. This conſideration weighs much with me in reducing the public miniſtry of Chriſt to one year and a few months.

3. This Philip is by Joſephus called Herod, but it was very common for perſons to have two names, and in all other reſpects the account of Joſephus agrees ex-

actly with that of the evangeliſts. According to this Jewiſh hiſtorian, this Herodias, a woman of a very looſe character, was ſeduced by Herod, whoſe morals alſo were very debauched, to leave her huſband and live with him, tho' ſhe had a child (the daughter of whom we have an account of in this place) by Philip. According to Joſephus, this Philip was a man of an excellent character, tho' Jeſus being chiefly in the territory of Herod, very little is ſaid of Philip in the Evangelical Hiſtory.

5. According to Mark, it was Herodias only who wiſhed John's death, while Herod protected him. Mark. vi. 9, *therefore Herodias had a quarrel againſt him.* This difference among many others, is a ſufficient proof that Mark did not copy, or abridge Matthew. But the difference is of no conſequence, as it cannot in the leaſt affect the credibility of the general hiſtory. Whether, according to Matthew, Herod himſelf wiſhed to put John to death, but was reſtrained by his fear of the multitude, or according to Mark, it was Herodias only that wiſhed it, but was reſtrained by Herod, the facts are the ſame, and the two writers differ only in their method of accounting for them.

We have other proofs of the great popularity of John the Baptiſt, and of his being almoſt univerſally conſidered as a true prophet. Thus when our Saviour, in reply to the cavils of the Scribes and Phariſees, a little before his death, aſked them what they thought of the Baptiſm of John, they did not dare to ſpeak their real ſentiments, becauſe *they feared the people*, who all reſpected him as a prophet.

6 In the Eaſt no perſon of any rank or character ever dances in public. This is always done by looſe women, who make it their profeſſion, and hire themſelves for the purpoſe, and according to all travellers, their dances are very laſcivous and indecent. It was therefore a mark of great condecenſion in this daughter of Herodias, tho' a certain proof of the profligacy of her character, and that of her mother, that ſhe would do it.

8. According to Mark ſhe had not been previouſly inſtructed by her mother, but went out to conſult her what ſhe ſhould aſk. Such a difference as this, only proves that the two hiſtorians did not write in concert, but independently of each other: and therefore inſtead of leſſening, does in reality ſtrengthen, the credibility of the account. For all authentic hiſtories are written by different hiſtorians with theſe ſlight variations. They prove, however, that the evangeliſts did not write by inſpiration, for then there would have been no difference in their account of facts, but from their own knowledge or information; and as none of the evangeliſts were preſent at this tranſaction, it had no doubt been differently reported to them.

10. We ſee how arbitrary were the proceedings of Herod with reſpect to John. It does not appear that he ever had a regular trial, much leſs that he had been ſentenced to die for any crime with which he had been charged. It is, indeed, probable, from the great popularity of John, that the country would not have borne this, tho' when the fact was committed, and there was no remedy, they might be ſtruck with conſternation and

and do nothing. Let us bleſs God for the happineſs of a free government under which we live, that in this country no man can be long confined without being tried; no man can be condemned without being heard, and ſeeing his accuſers face to face; and that all executions are in public with ſufficient notice before hand.

13. In this Jeſus acted prudently as he did on all other occaſions of ſeeming danger, tho' he well knew that God would protect him, till the time of his public miniſtry was accompliſhed. Much more then, ought we to act with the ſame prudence, when to us all future events are uncertain.

Into a deſert place.] Jeſus had left the territories of Herod, and had gone into thoſe of Philip, whoſe wife Herodias had been. According to Joſephus, this Philip was an excellent prince.

Ibid. *By land;*] ſo the phraſe πεζῇ, as Pearce ſhews, often ſignifies.

Mark VI. 14. *John the Baptiſt is riſen from the dead.*] It is evident that Herod had no idea either that the ſoul of John the Baptiſt might have animated Jeſus, or that the ſoul was in a ſeparate ſtate; for he ſuppoſed the Baptiſt himſelf, in perſon, was come to life again.

It will be ſome ſatisfaction to you to be informed what became of all the perſons mentioned in this hiſtory, eſpecially as to appearance the hand of God was particularly concerned in the events. Herod, who had divorced the daughter of Aretas, a king of ſome part of Arabia, in order to marry Herodias, was obliged to go

to

to war with him on that account, and was unſucceſsful. afterwards his wife, on his nephew Agrippa obtaining the title of *King*, inſtigated him to go to Rome to ſolicit the ſame for himſelf. But inſtead of obtaining this, being accuſed of diſaffection to the Romans, both he and his wife were baniſhed to Lyons in Gaul, where they continued till their deaths. As to this daughter of Herodias, it is ſaid that as ſhe was walking on the ice, it broke under her, and that being caught by the neck, her head was ſevered from her body. Philip died as he had lived, in peace, univerſally reſpected and lamented.

SECTION XXXVII.

The feeding of the Five Thousand.

Matt. XIV. 14——21. Mark VI. 30——44. Luke IX. 10——17. John VI. 1——14.

WE are now come to the account of a tranſaction recorded at full length by all the four evangeliſts, and moſt circumſtantially by John, who had ſeen what the others had written. Now I cannot think that John did this becauſe there was any thing materially defective in the preceding accounts. For tho' his is, no doubt, more circumſtantial than any of the other three, the additional circumſtances mentioned by him are but inconſiderable. I am therefore rather inclined to think, that this has been an account of the tranſaction

tion written by *John, as taken* from his mouth, ſome time before he had *ſeen* the other goſpels, and perhaps before he had *formed* any deſign of writing one himſelf.

As the great buſineſs of the apoſtles was to relate the hiſtory of Jeſus, or to inform the world what he had taught and done, it could not be but that in an age and country, in which almoſt all perſons could read and write (for ſuch is now, and probably always has been, the caſe with the Jews) many perſons, not chuſing to depend upon their memories, would commit to writing what they heard the apoſtles deliver concerning things of ſo very extraordinary a nature, and if they had an opportunity, which many of them had, they would afterwards ſubmit what they had written to the reviſal of the apoſtles themſelves. From ſuch notes as theſe many imperfect hiſtories of Jeſus, would, no doubt, be compoſed, and to ſuch it is probable that Luke alludes in the introduction to his goſpel.

It is the more probable that this goſpel of John was compiled, partly from accounts ſeparately furniſhed by himſelf in the courſe of a long life, and partly compoſed for the purpoſe, as the different parts have not been put together with the greateſt care, with reſpect to the order of time; which not being a thing of the firſt conſequence, appears to have been but little attended to by theſe compilers. One whole chapter of this goſpel is unqueſtionably out of its place; and the laſt was added, as you may ſee, after a regular concluſion of the whole in the preceding chapter.

But

But on whatever occaſion the hiſtory we are going to conſider was compoſed, the particulars of which it conſiſts are moſt extraordinary, and if we may make a compariſon of miracles, all of which being performed by the immediate power of God, are equally eaſy to him, we ſhonld conſider this as one of the moſt ſtupendous and aſtoniſhing that we have upon record.

Mark VI. 33. And many knew *it*, that is *the place.* MARKLAND.

John VI. 1. This was in the territory of Philip the brother of Herod, a prince, as I have obſerved of an excellent character. But whether Jeſus came hither with a view to greater ſafety does not appear. As it was a deſert, or unfrequented part of the country, he might chuſe it for the ſake of retirement, for himſelf and the apoſtles after their miſſion, eſpecially as Luke ſays that upon their return *he took them aside privately into a desert place.* It appears however, that ſo great was the fame of Jeſus, and ſo attentive were the people to him, that he could not long be concealed, but into this retired place he was preſently followed by a very great multitude.

Perhaps an arm of the ſea only may be here intended. *Markland.*

3. This is very ſimilar to the circumſtance of our Lord's retiring from the crowds which incommoded him at Capernaum, and it was from a mountain in this part of the country that he delivered his excellent diſcourſe to his diſciples. Sitting was the poſture of a teacher among the Jews; ſo that when the evangeliſt ſays

ſays that Jeſus *ſat*, it is probable that he meant to imply that he *taught* his audience in that place.

4. The ſuppoſition that a paſſover happened about this period of the hiſtory, has occaſioned great embarraſſment to many of thoſe who have written harmonies of the evangeliſts, and it is remarkable that a very early writer, Irenæus, enumerating all the paſſovers that are mentioned in the courſe of the goſpel hiſtory, and whoſe wiſh it was to find therein as many as poſſible, makes no mention of this. For this reaſon, and others, many have ſuppoſed the word *passover* to have been an interpolation, the evangeliſt having mentioned the feaſt only. Biſhop Pearce thinks that the whole verſe is an interpolation.

6. As Jeſus knew very well what he was to do, and as he alſo knew that Philip could not poſſibly know his intentions, it looks as if he only meant to amuſe himſelf with his reply, tho' the queſtion would, no doubt, excite his attention to the extraordinary circumſtances in which they were.

7. Two hundred *denarii* (which we very improperly tranſlate *pence*, as it neceſſarily gives the Engliſh reader a falſe idea of the ſum) would be ſomething more than ſix pounds of our money; in real value about three times as much.

10. With what aſtoniſhment would the apoſtles hear ſuch an order as this, when there was no preparation to entertain ſo great a company, and they were without any proviſions. But they were uſed to an implicit obedience to his orders, and could have no doubt but what he

he directed them to do was proper. Mark says *they sat down in ranks by hundreds and fifties*, meaning probably an hundred in one direction, and fifty in another, making in all fifty ranks, of an hundred each, or exactly five thousand. This was an eaſy method of taking the exact number, and thereby aſcertaining the truth of this important fact.

11. With reſpect to the manner in which this miracle was wrought, there was ſomething in it more wonderful than the deſcent of the manna in the wilderneſs, ſince the proviſion ſeems to have multiplied in the hands of Jeſus. For this we are led to ſuppoſe from the manner in which it is related, rather than that the increaſe was made all at once, before the diſtribution was begun.

13. The order to collect the fragments was, no doubt, given with a view to impreſs the minds of all preſent, and eſpecially the diſciples who executed his orders, with a ſenſe of the greatneſs of the miracle; and nothing could do this more forcibly than finding that more proviſion remained than there was at the beginning of the entertainment. This circumſtance alſo ſhews that all the company had had enough; and conſidering the number of them, what remained was not more than might have been expected from ſo many perſons eating till they were ſatisfied, and without waſte.

14. It is no wonder that the ſpectators drew this inference from ſuch a miracle as this. For it is hardly poſſible to imagine the circumſtances of a miracle which ſhould be leſs expoſed to cavil. It was not done in private

private, but in the preſence of a great multitude, and in open day; and it was of ſo great magnitude, that no ſlight of hand could have availed any thing. Neither could it have been any ocular deception, becauſe theſe loaves and fiſhes afforded real nouriſhment to an hungry crowd, and they muſt have been delivered in a ſtate ready prepared for eating. And as this was done in the open field, it is impoſſible that any preparations could have been made beforehand for an exhibition of the kind. Had it been made in a private houſe, or in a town, a deception would have been more practicable, tho' then extremely difficult; and it muſt have required the concurrence of many perſons; whereas it is evident that the apoſtles themſelves were no more apprized of the intentions of Jeſus than any of the multitude. This miracle is a proof of a proper *creative power*, and the effect, great as it was, muſt have been inſtantaneous. With reſpect to all the miracles of our Saviour recorded by the evangeliſts, it may be obſerved that, like his diſcourſes, they were all proper to the occaſion that preſented, and roſe naturally out of them; which ſhews that there was no antecedent preparations for any of them. Of this kind was furniſhing wine when it was particularly wanted; curing the ſick of every kind at all times and in all places, as they happened to be brought to him, and in this caſe feeding a great multitude that was famiſhing for want of nouriſhment. Beſides the number of Jeſus's miracles was as great as to furniſh opportunities of frequent examination; and the circumſtances of all of them were ſuch, that an impoſition

ſition would have been impoſſible. Let us rejoice in our faith in ſo important an hiſtory as this which has ſuch abundant confirmation; but let us more effectually ever bear in mind that the end of faith is a ſuitable practice.

SECTION XXXVIII.

Jeſus walks on the Sea.

Matt. XIV. 22——36. Mark VI. 45——56. John VI. 15——21.

FROM an account of one ſtupendous miracle we now proceed to another, both of a very different nature; as the object of it was not the relief of any perſons in diſtreſs, but, as far as we can judge, a mere act of power, or a proof of ſuch power accompanying Jeſus as was equal to the controul, and conſequently to the eſtabliſhment, of any of the laws of nature. It was calculated to give his diſciples the beſt founded faith in his divine miſſion, and the ſtrongeſt confidence in all his declarations of what he promiſed to do for them in any future time.

22. John ſays Ch. vi, 15, that *when Jeſus perceived that they* (the multitude) *would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain to pray*; and here Matthew ſays that *Jeſus conſtrained his diſciples to go into a ſhip.* It is probable therefore that his diſciples favoured the views of the and

multitude, and were impatient to ſee their maſter a king; ſo that it was with ſome difficulty that he obliged them to leave him. At this time the apoſtles themſelves had the ſame low and unworthy views with the reſt of the people; and when they were gone, Jeſus might with more eaſe diſengage himſelf from the importunities of the reſt of the multitude.

23. It is very obſervable that we often read of Jeſus retiring for the purpoſe of private devotion, which ſhews the deep ſenſe he had of his entire dependence upon God, and is a ſtriking example for us, who are equally dependent upon the great Being who made us, and continually ſupports us. It is extraordinary, however, that theſe frequent accounts of Jeſus praying to God, ſhould not have prevented any idea of his being himſelf God. For if he had been God, he could not have had any occaſion to pray. That his human nature prayed to his divine nature, or that one part of himſelf prayed to the other part, is too abſurd to be replied to.

25. The fourth or laſt watch of the night was near morning. Beſides the event here recorded was probably about the time of full moon, ſo that, tho' it was night, it was not ſo dark but that objects might be ſeen at ſome diſtance.

26. This was a very natural apprehenſion to perſons who believed in apparitions or ſpirits, as they were ſome times called, i. e. ſomething in the form of a man, but without ſubſtance. Theſe ſpirits were not always ſuppoſed to have been the ſouls of men; and it is obſerveable

able that in the ſcriptures we never read of any of them being called the ſpirit of any other perſon; even when Jeſus appeared to his diſciples after his reſurrection, and they thought it had been *a ſpirit*; it is not ſaid that they thought it to have been *his* ſpirit, but only a ſpirit, as an apparition in general, tho' perhaps in his form.

28. In our tranſlation it is, *If it be thou*, but if Peter had had the ſmalleſt doubt of its being Jeſus, he would never have ventured upon the ſea to meet him. I therefore render it *Since it is thou.*

30. The whole account of this tranſaction is perfectly natural, ſuch as we might expect from a perſon who was preſent, as Matthew, no doubt, was. The fright of the people in the ſhip was certainly natural, and ſo was Peter's deſire when his fears were diſſipated, to walk on the ſea to meet Jeſus. His familiarity with his maſter, as well as his confidence in himſelf, appears to have been on all occaſions greater than that of the other apoſtles; and it was equally natural, and in character with reſpect to him, for his heart to fail him when he found nothing but the waves under him, and the boiſterous wind agitating them.

31. Here Jeſus ſhewed the ſame tenderneſs and condeſcenſion that he did upon many other occaſions, permitting Peter to feel the effects of his preſumption, as he did upon a more ſerious occaſion afterwards, but not ſuffering him to receive any material injury from it.

32. That this ceaſing of the wind was miraculous, is not ſaid by the evangeliſt, but probably it was ſo.

33. The aſtoniſhment of the perſons in this ſhip was equal to that of thoſe who ſaw Jeſus perform the ſimilar miracle of ſtilling the waves; and no wonder. They could not but conclude from it that God was with him, and highly favoured him, which is all that is neceſſarily meant by his being called the *Son of God*. It is probable, however, that by this phraſe theſe people meant the Meſſiah, who was the Son of God, and a perſon favoured by God, in a peculiar manner. Their attempts to make him a king, ſhewed their perſuaſion that he was the Meſſiah, for they would not have thought of this with reſpect to any other prophet.

Notwithſtanding the aſtoniſhment frequently expreſſed by thoſe who were ſpectators of our Saviour's miracles, we do not find that they were at any time led to ſuſpect that he was God, which they would as readily have ſaid if they had really thought him to be God, as to have called him the *Son of God*. And certainly the Son of God muſt ſignify a perſon different from God, whoſe ſon he was; and in the Old Teſtament the phraſe *Son of God*, is generally applied to men who were particularly favoured by God.

36. The knowledge that the people of this country had of Jeſus, was probably from his having cured the two demoniacs in it. They had, therefore, no doubt of his power to cure any diſeaſe; and they were not diſappointed in their expectations from him.

SEC-

SECTION XXXIX.

Jesus discourses with the Jews concerning Bread.

John VI. 22——71.

WE now find Jesus at Capernaum, surrounded by a mixed and cavilling multitude, several of them the very persons whom he had lately fed in a miraculous manner, and who had been disappointed in their expectations of making him a king. Jesus knowing their dispositions, and that their minds were not open to any favourable impression; and not chusing (in his own language) *to cast pearls before swine*, he upon this, as upon a former occasion, when he spake in parables, addressed them in a dark enigmatical manner; having a very important meaning, but not being solicitous about being understood by them.

25. This appears afterwards to have been in the synagogue, so that it was probably the Sabbath day, and that they found him attending the public worship of the place.

27. In this discourse of Jesus there is something analogous to his conversation with the woman of Samaria. He there compared himself, or rather his doctrine, to *living*, or spring *water*, which would prevent any return of thirst, a water *which springeth up to eternal life*; and in this he compares himself to *bread*, which if a man eat he will never hunger more. Now in this

there was nothing peculiarly hard to be underſtood by Jews, with whom it appears to have been uſual to compare knowledge and inſtruction to bread; and indeed the compariſon is very eaſy and natural, knowledge doing that to the mind, which bread does to the body viz. nouriſhing, ſtrengthening, and enlivening it. The offence, therefore, which the Jews took at Jeſus on this occaſion, ſeems to have ariſen from their diſappointment in their favourite view of making him a king. Their minds being carnal, and not looking beyond the preſent life they had no comprehenſion of what he ſaid reſpecting another, and being offended, they cavilled with him about his language, without any view of gaining information or inſtruction. Jeſus perceiving their obſtinacy, anſwered in a manner little adapted to give them ſatisfaction, not being ſolicitous about the attachment of perſons ſo prejudiced as they were.

Sealed ſignifies appointed, or commiſſioned, and this appointment or commiſſion being from God, the hearers of Jeſus could not doubt of his being empowered to perform whatever he ſhould promiſe in the name of God, even raiſing the dead at the general judgment to which he here alluded.

29. Jeſus having mentioned *labour* by which they could procure bread, which would nouriſh them to eternal life, they naturally aſked him what that labour was, or what they ſhould do to procure this bread; or what were the works of God, the works that he would ſo reward them for. And Jeſus naturally replied, that the things God required of them at this time was their receiving

ceiving him as a meſſenger from God, and of courſe complying with his inſtructions, or hearing and doing his word.

He that believeth in me so as the ſcriptures have commanded. MARKLAND.

30. *What ſign ſhewest thou?*] It ſeems extraordinary that the very people who had been juſt before fed by a miracle ſhould demand any other ſign, as an evidence of divine miſſion. But the ſign that they thought to be characteriſtic of the Meſſiah was ſome viſible appearance in the clouds, or heavens, which therefore, we find, they were inceſſantly demanding. They ſeem, indeed, to allude to, and acknowledge his having fed them by a miracle; but ſtill the bread that Jeſus gave them did not *come down from heaven*, as the manna had done. Our Lord, ſeeing them ſo very unreaſonable and obſtinate, diſcourſed to them in a dark enigmatical manner, not being deſirous of their attachment, or attendance.

32. Probably *αληθινόν* ought to be underſtood as agreeing with the former as well as the latter *αρτον*. Moſes gave you not the true bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. T.

Here, however, as on ſeveral former occaſions, there may be a Hebrew form of compariſon, and the meaning be; *The bread given by the Son of man producing eternal life, is preferable to the bread that was given by Moſes.*

36. *Ye have ſeen me* perform the miracle of the loaves, *and ye believe not* that teſtimony that I am the bread of life. T.

Here Jeſus conſiders the ſucceſs of his miſſion as depending on the providence of God, who was the beſt judge of what was to be wiſhed with reſpect to the number and the rank of his firſt diſciples. As, therefore, on a former occaſion, he thanked God for his wiſely ordering that theſe diſciples ſhould not, in general, be the rich, and great, but the poor and humble, ſo here he entirely acquieſces in the will of God, ſaying that, whatever that will was, it ſhould be his; for his whole object was no other than to fulfill the will of God who ſent him.

40. Here our Lord reverts to the great object of his miſſion, which he declares in the plaineſt terms. Who were the particular perſons that God would give him for his immediate diſciples, or what was the will of God in that reſpect, he might not always know; but this he knew, that whoever they ſhould be, he would be empowered to give them eternal life, and this was, you will obſerve, not by continuing their being from the time of their death, but by *raiſing them up at the laſt day*. He does not ſay that when he dies he will take his ſoul into heaven, but I will raiſe *him up at the laſt day*. To this great day let us habitually have reſpect, the day when the ſecrets of all hearts will be revealed, and when every man will receive according to his works.

41. We now proceed with this remarkable diſcourſe of Jeſus to the cavilling Jews of the Synagogue of Capernaum.

42. They could not ſee with what propriety or truth Jeſus could ſay he came down from heaven when they were

were acquainted with his birth and parentage, and well knew that he was born, and had lived, like other men. We ſee here that the people of Galilee conſidered Jeſus as no leſs the ſon of Joſeph than of Mary; ſo that if his birth had been miraculous, they were ignorant of it; and yet as the hiſtory is related either by Matthew or Luke, it muſt have excited great attention, and muſt, one would think, have been recollected when he made his public appearance.

46. There is much obſcurity and uncertainty with reſpect to the meaning of Jeſus in theſe verſes. I ſhall give in the paraphraſe what may perhaps be their true ſenſe.

47. Here Jeſus expreſſes his meaning in plainer language, aſſerting that the qualification for eternal life which he announced, was believing on him. But in *believing*, we are always to ſuppoſe *obeying*, to be comprehended; as he ſays upon another occaſion, the true believer *(he that builds his houſe upon a rock, is he that heareth his ſayings, and doth them)* After this plain account of his doctrine, it is moſt evident that what he had ſaid of himſelf being bread, his fleſh meat, and his blood drink, could only be a ſtrong figure of the true meaning, of which his audience would be ſufficiently apprized; and the reaſon why he called *himſelf*, and not his *doctrine*, bread, was probably becauſe a body, or fleſh, was *ſubſtance*, and therefore more nearly reſembled bread, than mere *truth*, to which he all along alluded.

52. It is evident from this that theſe Jews were mere cavillers, and only meant to turn the language of

Jesus into ridicule. For he had just before said, *he that believeth on me hath everlasting life*, so that the eating of his flesh could not be necessary. He therefore, seeing their disposition, repeats the same figure in a still stronger manner, but the key to it had been given before.

55. *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*] A very strong figure; meaning by his flesh and blood, his *doctrine*, which may be called the food of the soul.

58. This language of Jesus, together with his calling the bread and wine at his supper, his body and blood, are alledged by the Catholics as proofs of their doctrine of *transubstantiation*. They maintain that the elements of bread and wine, when regularly consecrated, are changed into the real body and blood of Christ, and that literally to eat his body is necessary to salvation. It was, however, more than a thousand years before this doctrine was advanced; and the different steps upon which it was made are extremely curious. But I shall not enter into the detail of them here, having done it pretty much at large in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. A refutation of so absurd a doctrine as this, will not be required by my readers.

63. As it is breath that gives life to the body, which is dead without it, so my doctrine is that which gives life, meaning eternal life, to man. W.

In these words Jesus gives an explanatory key to most of the obscurities in the preceding discourse; and it

it appears from Peter's profeſſion, v. 68, 69, that he underſtood them as ſuch.

65. The ſenſe of all that is included between this verſe and the ſixty firſt, I have endeavoured to expreſs, in the paraphraſe, in which I have ſuppoſed that Jeſus ſpoke of his having *deſcended* from heaven in a figurative ſenſe, tho' the *aſcent* of which he ſpeaks in the ſame ſentence was a literal one. This might well be, conſidering that by his *body*, which he compared to bread, he only meant his *doctrine*, which could not have any other than a figurative deſcent, it not being a ſubſtance, and therefore incapable of local motion. Beſides any perſon may be ſaid to come from God, or, which is the ſame thing, to come from heaven, where God is ſuppoſed to reſide, who has received a commiſſion from God. Thus John the Baptiſt is ſaid to have been *ſent of God*, and Jeſus ſpeaks of his ſending apoſtles into the world, as he himſelf was ſent into the world. But when our Lord received his commiſſion, which was probably during the forty days in which he faſted after his baptiſm, he might have an idea of his being in heaven, as Paul had during his trance, when he could not tell whether the ſcene was real, or only a viſion. Conſequently when this remarkable ſcene was over, and Jeſus found himſelf on the earth, he might imagine that he had been taken up into heaven, and brought down again. It is very poſſible, therefore, that Jeſus might allude to his having been in heaven, and having come down again, in the literal ſenſe of the words, when he ſpeaks of *his aſcending up where he had*

had been before. This was the opinion of the Polish Socinians, and also of Mr. Palmer, whose sagacity in scripture researches was truly admirable. That Jesus did not allude to any pre-existent and unembodied state, is very evident, because he here speaks of himself as the *Son of Man*; and certainly his *body* had not been in heaven before he was born.

I would also observe in general that we are not to build great and important doctrines, such as that of the pre-existence of Christ, and his having created the world, merely on supposed allusions to them; tho' when any doctrine has been clearly taught, or any fact plainly asserted, we may then naturally suppose allusions, where they otherwise would not have been imagined.

69. We have here a specimen of the excellent disposition of Peter, and of the steady attachment which he had to his master. He was, no doubt, as much disappointed as the rest of the disciples at Jesus not declaring himself a king: but such was his conviction of his coming from God, that this great disappointment did not breake his faith. We see too that he perfectly understood the meaning of Jesus in the preceding discourse, to which he alludes; acknowledging that it was his *words*, or his *doctrine*, that would prepare men for eternal life.

70. *One of you is a traitor* or *the devil.*] This may be rendered one of you is a *false accuser.* And as the same term is generally used for *the source*, or *principle of evil*, and there is no allusion to any particular act of treachery on this occasion, our Lord might only mean to say that he was a *bad man*, notwithstanding the many advan-

advantages he had for religious inſtruction. Thus our Lord called Peter *Satan*, when what he ſuggeſted was of an evil nature and tendency.

PARAPHRASE.

John VI. 44. Do not imagine that I am very anxious about gaining you to be my diſciples. The ſucceſs of my goſpel in this age, as well as in every future age, will be ſuch as my Father ſhall judge to be moſt proper. But whoever ſhall become my diſciple, not in *name* only, but *in deed and in truth*, I will raiſe him up to eternal life at the laſt day. 45. That the ſucceſs of my preaching depends upon the good will and providence of God, is atteſted by the prophets, who ſay that *they ſhall be all taught of God.* All, therefore, who come to me muſt be thoſe whoſe hearts it ſhall pleaſe God to be ſo well diſpoſed as to hear and receive the truth. 46. Not that I ſpeak of any miraculous influence of the Divine Being, ſo that men ſhall be impelled to become my diſciples by a direct impulſe from him. This is true only of myſelf, who have the moſt intimate and peculiar communication with God. What I mean by hearing and learning of the Father, is hearing and learning things by thoſe means which the Divine Being has provided in the courſe of his common providence, and agreable to the general laws which he has eſtabliſhed in nature.

61. Are you offended that I ſhould ſpeak of myſelf under the character of *bread* to be eaten by you, when

I mean

I mean my doctrine, which is to be received and digeſted for your ſpiritual nouriſhment, and that I have ſpoken of myſelf as having been ſent down from heaven, as was the manna on which the Iſraelites ſubſiſted in the wilderneſs. 62. You may perhaps ſee more truth in this repreſentation than you now imagine, when you ſhall ſee me actually and literally go up into heaven, from whence I have now ſpoken of my having deſcended, in a figurative ſenſe only. 63. My meaning, however, has been altogether ſpiritual, and it is only the figurative meaning of what I have been deſcribing that can poſſibly be of any uſe. To eat my flesh literally would profit you nothing. It is the word that I ſpeak unto you, it is my doctrine, that is the true ſpirit and meaning of what I have been deſcribing. It is this alone on which men can live in a ſpiritual and proper ſenſe. 64. Some of you, I know, do not believe on me. This (ſays the evangeliſt) had been communicated to Jeſus from the very beginning of his miniſtry; ſo that he fully knew who would be his ſincere diſciples, and who they were who would deſert and betray him. 65. This led him to ſay that, no man could come to him if it was not given to him of the Father.

SEC.

SECTION XL.

Jesus cures the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, and discourses with the Jews concerning his Mission.

John V. 1——47.

IT is generally agreed that the Apostle John, who had seen the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, wrote his, in order to supply their defects, and also to check some heresies which began to prevail in his time. But this he does without expressly mentioning the heresies, or pointing out the defects of the other evangelists. It is pretty evident, however, that writing, as he probably did, either very near to, or soon after, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, he attended more than the other evangelists had done to such passages of the history of Jesus, and especially to such of his discourses, as tended to shew that the Jews had had sufficient opportunities of being convinced of his divine mission, that he himself had frequently expostulated with them on the subject in the most open manner, but that they had always shewn the most inveterate obstinacy, and a disposition of mind that would not yield to any proper evidence whatsoever. They were so worldly minded, that no evidence of miracles the strongest that could be given, was capable of satisfying them, that any person besides a prince, and a conqueror, could be the Messiah, promised

ed by the antient prophets. This chapter furnishes us with a very remarkable example of this kind, as well of their unreaſonable cavils on account of Jeſus performing his benevolent miracles on the ſabbath day, as if it was a *ſervile work*, forbidden by the laws of Moſes; and as if he who could do ſuch things as theſe (which muſt have been by the power of God) had not neceſſarily a ſufficient warrant for ſo doing.

We are not concerned to know whether this was a real miracle or not. It was, at leaſt the general opinion of the Jews that it was ſo, and if it was a miſtake, it was not the buſineſs of Jeſus to correct or conſider it, any more than their opinion of madneſs being occaſioned by demons. If theſe waters had any medical virtue, the Jews would naturally aſcribe it to the hand of God. Indeed, the ſacred writers themſelves habitually refer every thing that is good to God. Whether it be brought about in a miraculous way or not, as we read in the proper tranſlation of Pſalm 104. *He maketh the winds his angels, and flames of fire his meſſengers.*

John V. 1. The fifth and ſixth chapter beginning with the ſame words have probably been tranſpoſed. MANN.

18. The offence which the Jew took at our Lord's expreſſion was not becauſe he ſaid that God was his father; for they were ready enough to ſay of themſelves, chap. viii. 41. *We have one father, even God*: but becauſe when he called God his father, he at the ſame time pretended to act like him. My father *worketh* hitherto and I *work*. Accordingly our Lord (verſe 19. and following) anſwers to their charge by largely

largely aſſerting that in many reſpects he did, and ſhould act like God his Father, but only by his commiſſion, authority and power.

It is in the higheſt degree improbable, either that Jeſus ſhould intend to repreſent himſelf as, in all reſpects *equal to God*, when he ſaid, *my Father worketh hitherto and I work*, or that the Jews ſhould have ſo underſtood him; there being nothing in the words that could lead to ſuch a conſtruction. We all do many things that God does, and are exhorted in the ſcriptures ſo to do. Had the Jews really thought that Jeſus made himſelf in any proper ſenſe *equal to God*, this converſation would, no doubt, have had a more ſerious conſequence. Would the Jews have borne this of any man, and particularly of a man whom they diſliked? Would they have needed to ſeek any occaſion to put him to death, and merely for healing the ſick of the ſabbath day, when they had ſuch a better handle againſt him, an accuſation in which all the nation would have concurred. If it had been Jeſus's real intention to inſinuate that he was equal to God, would he have explained his meaning away, as he did, by ſaying that the *ſon could do nothing of himſelf?* Would not that have been ſaying and unſaying in a manner very unworthy of a divine teacher? His manner of reply will certainly juſtify us in ſuppoſing that he meant no ſuch thing, and he did not imagine that his hearers ſuppoſed it; but only that they thought he aſſumed more than became him on account of his relation to God. For to this charge and nothing elſe, he replies.

19. This

19. This is evidently the language of one who conceived himself to be nothing more than any other man, without the power of God accompanying him, and could not have been said with truth, if he had been either God, or originally endowed by God with a power equal to that of the making of the world, and consequently of controlling the laws of nature. Is it not true that we have *within ourselves*, tho' by the gift of God, the powers of speaking and walking, &c. &c? If Jesus, therefore, had an equally natural power of working miracles, could he have said with truth, that of *himself* he could not heal the sick, and raise the dead? Would he not have deceived his hearers by such language?

23. The reason why men were to know the son, is evidently, from the connection in which the whole passage stands, *not on his own account*, for he had just before said, that *of himself he could do nothing*, but solely on account of the power conferred upon him by the father, who is said to have *committed all judgment to him*, which alone clearly implies that he had no right to it of himself, independently of the *gift* of his father. The honour paid to an ambassador is never considered as paid to him on *his own account*, but only on account the person who sends him, and whom he represents.

25. *And now is ;*] referring probably, to several instances of his raising or intending to raise, persons from the dead in his life time.

26. As there was a propriety in Christ's being in *all respects like his brethren*, or of the same nature with them, neither greater nor less, and especially that his resurrection from the dead should be a pattern of ours,

so

ſo it was alſo particularly proper on account of his being our final judge, that we might have more confidence in the equity of his ſentence. You will obſerve however, that tho' Chriſt is generally ſaid to be our judge, yet that this office is not ſtrictly confined to him. Paul ſays *that the ſaints ſhall judge the world*, and Jeſus himſelf ſays *that when he ſhall ſit upon his throne*, the apoſtles *alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.* What is ſtrictly meant by Chriſt, or the apoſtles, or the ſaints in general, *judging the world*, we muſt not expect to know with certainty till the great day ſhall come. It is a figurative expreſſion, but no doubt has ſome important meaning.

34, 35. Although our Lord declines inſiſting on John's teſtimony concerning himſelf, he mentions it very properly; what weight it had with the conſiderate and candid among the Jews appears from Ch. x, 41. who ſaid *John did no miracle, but all things that John ſpake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.*

The images of *Fire* and *Light*, happily expreſs the benefits of inſtruction. It is frequent in the Pſalms. Thus David ſpeaks of the law of God as a *light to his feet, and a lamp to his path.* It is alſo remarkable that the ſame figure is applied to Elias in the book of Eccleſiaſticus, Ch. xl, 1. Then ſtood up *Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp.*

36, And following. Jeſus refers to three kinds of evidences which the Father had given of his miſſion. Firſt, The miracles he empowered him to work, verſe 36. Secondly, The voice from heaven, and the deſcent of the ſpirit on him in a viſible form at his baptiſm, of

which many had been witneſſes, verſe 37, 38; and thirdly the predictions of the prophets, verſe 39. If we read the words in the latter part of the 37th and 38th verſes interrogatively, they will appear to refer to what happened at the baptiſm of Jeſus, and to contain a very ſtriking ſentiment. *Have ye neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his appearance? And have ye not his word remaining in you, that ye believe not him whom he hath ſent?* i. e. Do ye not remember what he then ſaid; or hath it left no impreſſion on you? T.

39. The ſenſe will be clearer if the 42d verſe be read after the 39th. T. R.

42. It hath been already ſuggeſted in the firſt volume of the *Theological Repository*, that this clauſe ſeems, through the error of ſome early tranſcriber, to have got out of its original place, which probably was before the 40th verſe. If we reſtore it thither, the paſſage will read thus, *But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you, and ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.* A ſentiment perfectly conformable to what our Lord had ſaid to the Jews in Galilee, Ch. vi. 45. *Every one therefore who hath heard and learneth of the Father cometh unto me.* The following words alſo will have a like clear connexion. *I receive not honour from men; I am come in my Father's name.* By δοξαν (honour) he ſeems to mean *credentials* or the *evidence* of the truth of his miſſion as the Chriſt. So alſo verſe 44, compare 2 Peter, i. 17. T.

43. This was verified in the future hiſtory of the Jews, who received as the Meſſiah perſons who wrought no miracles, but only promiſed them great temporal advan-

advantages, ſuch as they expected from their Meſſiah, whereas Jeſus, who had every proper teſtimonial of a divine miſſion, was rejected, becauſe he wanted that one characteriſtic on which they perpetually inſiſted, namely his being their prince and temporal deliverer.

47. We do not find in the writings of Moſes any proper prophecy of the Meſſiah. Theſe were reſerved to a later period of the Jewiſh hiſtory. But it was uſual with the Jews, who were at that time expecting the greateſt things from the Meſſiah, to ſuppoſe that there were alluſions to him in all the parts of the ſcripture. There is, indeed, in Moſes, a deſcription of true and falſe prophets in general, and Jeſus exactly anſwered to one of thoſe who were deſcribed by Moſes as to riſe up after him *like unto himself*, whom they were required to hear; and yet tho' Jeſus was not only like, and equal, but even ſuperior to Moſes, the Jews rejected him.

PARAPHRASE.

John V. 17. My heavenly Father worketh continually in the courſe of his providence, and on the ſabbaths as well as on other days, ſo that in doing good on the ſabbath days I only follow his example. 18. The Jews were the more enraged, and ſought to kill him, becauſe, beſides having broken the ſabbath, he now pretended to juſtify himſelf in ſo doing by the example of God, as if God's doing any thing would authorize him to do the like, which was to put himſelf on a level with God in a ſenſe which they thought no man had a right to do.

19. Jeſus anſwered, Think not that I arrogate to myſelf any thing independent of God. I do nothing of myſelf, but whatever the Father does I have in commiſſion to do the ſame. 20. For ſuch is the regard that the Father bears to me, that he empowers me to do whatever himſelf does; and that I have this power, you will ſee verified with reſpect to greater things than thoſe that you have yet ſeen. 21. The moſt extraordinary work that I do in imitation of God is raiſing the dead to life. This the Father does, and extraordinary as you may think it, the ſame power has the Son likewiſe. He alſo brings to life whomſoever he pleaſes. 22. Nay, ſubſequent to the reſurrection, the general judgment is a thing that God does not think proper to adminiſter in perſon, but he has committed it to the conduct of the Son. 23. Theſe powers, therefore, being delegated from the Father to the Son, the Son is to be honoured as the Father's repreſentative.

24. This power of raiſing the dead to an eternal happy life I ſhall exert in favour of all who believe and obey my goſpel. 25. The time is now at hand when I ſhall exhibit ſome ſpecimens of this great power of raiſing the dead; and in due time all the dead ſhall hear my voice and live. 26. For as the Father has the power of giving life, ſo has he communicated the ſame power to the Son. 27. And there is a particular propriety in his delegating to a *man* the office of judging and deciding the fates of men, as there can be no reaſon to complain of the ſentence; ſince a man, who has been tempted, and who has felt, like themſelves, may be ſuppoſed to make all reaſonable allowance for them. Theſe

conſider-

conſiderations may ſerve to leſſen your wonder at the communication of theſe very extraordinary powers to a man.

28, 29. Do not wonder at it, therefore, for it is certainly true, that all the dead ſhall hear my voice and come to life, the righteous to eternal life and happineſs, and the wicked to condemnation.

30. But in all this there is nothing that I do of myſelf. It is from God that I receive this perfect knowledge of characters which enables me to decide juſtly concerning them. My judgement, therefore, muſt be juſt, becauſe it is the ſame with that of God himſelf. It is his judgment that guides mine, and his will that I obey in all things. 31. If I could produce no evidence of the power that I claim beſides my own aſſertion, you would be juſtified in diſregarding my pretenſions. 32. But I have a witneſs in my favour whom you yourſelves reſpect, and the teſtimony that he bore is confirmed by ſuch facts as both myſelf and you are well acquainted with, eſpecially the viſible deſcent of the ſpirit of God upon me at my baptiſm. 33. Not content with what John ſaid of his own accord, you ſent a ſolemn deputation to him, demanding to know what his pretenſions were; and upon that occaſion he ſolemnly renounced all claim to being the Meſſiah, referring to me as one who was to come immediately after him. 34. This evidence I alledge as what will have weight with yourſelves, and may be expected to make a good impreſſion upon you; and indeed John was a diſtinguiſhed prophet, and at firſt you were diſpoſed to receive all that he delivered. 36. But this is not the evidence on

which I lay the principal ſtreſs? The moſt deciſive proof of my miſſion from God is thoſe miraculous works which no man could perform but by the immediate power of God; who alone, being the author of nature, can controul the laws of it. Theſe works bear witneſs that the Father has ſent me.

37. But beſides this, I can appeal to a ſtill more direct teſtimony from God, at the delivery of which many of you were preſent. Do you not recollect that at my baptiſm a voice was heard, proceeding from God himſelf, ſaying *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 17. Was not this as diſtinct and evident as the voice of God from Mount Sinai at the giving of the law of Moſes? Did you not both hear the *words*, and likewiſe perceive the *form* by which the deſcent of the ſpirit upon me was ſignified; for all this paſſed in open day light, and before crouds of people.

38. But the true reaſon why you diſregard the teſtimony of God in this inſtance is your diſregard to the authority and precepts of God in other inſtances, eſpecially in things of the moſt importance, thoſe of a moral nature, which argues a mind biaſſed by criminal affections and luſts; and theſe ſhut the heart againſt the reception of divine truth. 39. A proof of your wilful obſtinacy and blindneſs of heart is that, though the ſcriptures teſtify concerning me, and you ſtudy them, and profeſs the higheſt regard for them you ſtill refuſe to come to me. 40. I well know the principles by which you are actuated, and it is not a principle of love to God, and reſpect to his authority

by

by whoſe ſpirit the ſcriptures were dictated; and therefore you reject me as the Meſſiah, refuſe to receive my doctrine, even though you would thereby receive that ſalvation which the prophets have promiſed you under me. 41. But your minds are ſo dazzled with the things of this world, that nothing will content you but a temporal and triumphant Meſſiah, and I diſclaim ll worldly honours. My kingdom is not of this world, and and ye are of the world.

43. So great a difference does this circumſtance alone make, that though I have the moſt undeniable evidence of a divine power accompanying me; yet, aſſuming no worldly diſtinctions, you will not on any account admit of my pretenſions to be the Meſſiah. Whereas, let others come promiſing you worldly glory and power, and you will receive them without any proper evidence whatever. 44. It is impoſſible that you ſhould receive ſuch a Meſſiah as you ſee me to be, while you are ſo much attached to the things of this world, ſo fond of worldly honours, and ſo averſe to that humility and ſelf-denial which my religion requires.

45. Do not think that I ſay this from malice and reſentment, and that I ſhall accuſe you on this account to my father. If I did bear you ſo much ill will, I ſhould have no occaſion to do this. Moſes, of whom you boaſt, will himſelf be your accuſer; for though he wrote concerning me, you have not been moved by what he wrote. If you believe not his writings, the authority of which you acknowledge, how ſhould you believe in me?

SECTION XLI.

Jesus discourses with the Pharisees concerning Traditions.

Matt. XV. 1——20. Mark VII. 1——23. John VII. 1.

So great was the offence that Jesus had given by curing a lame man on the Sabbath day, and by his conversation with the Jews afterwards on the subject of his mission, that they came to a resolution to take his life, and on this account we are informed by John (7. 1) *that he went into Galilee*, not chusing to make any longer stay in Judea. We now, therefore, after the feast of Pentecost, attend him again into Galilee, where we find some of the Scribes and Pharisees sent to watch him, no doubt with a view to find some accusation against him.

2. These Scribes and Pharisees having no pretence for accusing Jesus of breaking the laws of God, charge him with transgressing the traditions of the elders, on some of which they laid equal stress. Thus we are told with respect to this very tradition of always washing the hands before eating, about which we find nothing in the books of Moses, or in the prophets, that the Rabbi Akiba being in prison, and not having water enough brought to him both to wash and to drink, chose to do the former, saying it was better to die of thirst, than

than to neglect ſuch a cuſtom, and this is mentioned by Jewiſh writers as a high encomium of him.

3. They charged Jeſus with tranſgreſſing the commands of *man*, acknowledging them to be ſuch. What force, therefore, is there in his recrimination of them, that they tranſgreſſed the commands *of God*: and how could he condemn their traditions more effectually, than by ſaying they were contrary to the commands of God, which was true of ſome of them.

6. *Honour not his father and his mother.*] i. e. Do not *aſſiſt* and *maintain* them. This is the meaning of *honouring widows, that are widows indeed*, in Paul's Epiſtles. So alſo *worthy of double honour*, and of a double ſtipend, are ſynonymous.

The Jews imagined that ſome forms of affirming or denying, were of more force than others, and among theſe they thought that the uſe of the word *Corban*, of which was more common with them in later ages, *Conam*, to be of this binding nature; ſo that if they ſaid to any perſon, "Let whatever I could give you be *Corban*, or *Conam*," whatever natural or moral obligation they were otherwiſe under to give, it was then not lawful for them to do it; and the Jewiſh books abound with theſe nice diſtinctions concerning it. By this expreſſion they did not mean that they actually devoted their ſubſtance to any ſacred uſe, ſo as to give it to the temple, or the public, and thereby alienate it from their own uſe. For it was only a raſh oath, that what they had to give ſhould be no more the property of him who aſked for it, than if it had been given to God.

7. i. e. What

7. i. e. What Iſaiah ſaid of the people of his age, might with truth be applied to you.

10. Hitherto Jeſus had been addreſſing himſelf to the learned Scribes and Phariſees, who had come from Jeruſalem for the purpoſe of watching him. He now takes occaſion to addreſs himſelf in an emphatical manner to the common people, who were preſent, and to give them a moſt important leſſon of inſtruction.

11. As it appears that Jeſus's own diſciples did not underſtand his meaning in this expreſſion, it is probable that the people did not. But it was ſuch a ſaying as they would not eaſily forget, and the form of it might lead them to think more about it; ſo that it would make the deeper impreſſion, when by farther enquiry, they did come to underſtand it.

16. By this it ſhould ſeem that Jeſus thought that what he had ſaid was ſufficiently intelligible; and conſidering the circumſtances in which he delivered himſelf, we cannot help wondering that they could ſee any difficulty in it. But Jeſus had been uſed to ſpeak enigmatically, and had a farther meaning than appeared at firſt; and therefore his diſciples wiſhed that he would explain himſelf more fully, that they might have no doubt of his meaning.

20. There cannot be a more important leſſon than this, that nothing defiles a man, or makes him to be conſidered as *unclean* in the ſight of God, but ſomething of an immoral nature, ſomething that ariſes from the heart, as a man's inward temper or diſpoſition. All external actions flow from what is conceived in the heart, and derive their turpitude from that; ſo that if the

the heart be right, or a man's meaning and intention be good, he can never do what is in the ſight of God wrong. But when our Saviour ſays that nothing entering into a man defileth him, we are not to underſtand that a Jew, to whom certain meats were abſolutely forbidden by the laws of Moſes, might eat any thing. That would have been to tranſgreſs the laws of God, againſt which he was cautioning them, and to which both himſelf, the apoſtles, and all the chriſtian Jews, ſtrictly conformed. The meaning of Jeſus muſt be explained by the occaſion of his diſcourſe, which related only to the waſhing of hands before every meal; as if meat not eaten in thoſe circumſtances was unclean; whereas Jeſus aſſerts that nothing eaten in this manner, if proper to be eaten at all, could make a man unclean. But the penalty of doing any thing preſumptuouſly againſt the laws of God, tho' in itſelf ever ſo innocent, was by the laws of Moſes being *cut off from his people.*

Had Jeſus, who expreſsly ſays *he came not to deſtroy the law, but to fulfil it*, declared the abolition, or the inſignificance, of the laws of Moſes reſpecting meats, or any thing elſe, it could not but have excited the greateſt alarm. The apoſtles themſelves would have been ſtaggered at it, and would, no doubt, have queſtioned him about it. It is evident, therefore, that they did not underſtand him to have any ſuch meaning.

Mark VII. 9. *Ye entirely reject.* T. R.

Full well ye reject the commandment of God.] The word καλως properly ſignifies *finely*, or *excellently*; ſo that

that it looks as if our Lord ſpoke ironically upon this occaſion.

19. *Purging all meats.*] Pearce thinks that Mark wrote καθαριζοντα (i. e. αφεδρωνα) παντα τα βρωματα referring to the bowels, where the proper juices are ſecreted from the aliments.

PARAPHRASE.

Matt. XV. 14. He replied, I am not concerned at their reſentment. Every addition which thoſe men have made to the law of God, it is my buſineſs to extirpate, and it ſhall certainly be done. As to thoſe who are willing to delude, or to be deluded, there is no remedy for them.

SECTION XLII.

The favour ſhewn by Jeſus to the Syrophenician woman, and the cure of the Perſon who was deaf, and had an Impediment in his Speech.

Matt. XV. 21——31. Mark VII. 24.——37.

HITHERTO Jeſus had confined himſelf to the moſt populous parts of Galilee, in the neighbourhood chiefly of Capernaum. We now find him making an excurſion to the northern extremity of the country bordering upon Tyre and Sidon, which was inhabited by the remains of the people of Canaan, who had been expelled by Joſhua. Here it was that, being powerful

powerful, they at one time oppreſſed the Iſraelites; when being commanded by Siſera they were defeated by Deborah and Barak. At this time the country was conſidered as a part of Syria, or of Phœnicia, which was comprehended in it.

22. Though this woman is here called a *Canaanite*, and by Mark a *Syro-phœnician*, from the country which ſhe inhabited, it does not follow that ſhe was an idolater. Many perſons living in and near Judea were worſhippers of the true God, though they did not in all things conform to the cuſtoms of the Jews, ſo as to become proper proſelytes. Her confidence in our Saviour's power was certainly equal to that of any Jew, or any of his diſciples, and that power was always conſidered as the power of the God of the Jews.

By being *vexed with a demon*, I have often remarked, we are to underſtand being afflicted with ſome of thoſe diſeaſes which are uſually aſcribed to the influence of demons, or evil ſpirits, poſſeſſing men, and eſpecially diſordering their underſtandings, ſuch as madneſs, lunacy, epilepſy, &c. &c. Such is the univerſal opinion of the people in the Eaſt to this day, and we are not to wonder if the writers of the New Teſtament, or our Saviour himſelf, ſhould have adopted the ſame. The power of God was not the leſs, but the more conſpicuous when the perſon by whoſe word a diſeaſe was cured was ignorant of the nature of it.

23. Jeſus giving this woman no anſwer, we ſhall preſently ſee, was to try her faith and patience, how long ſhe would perſiſt in her importunity, notwithſtanding his ſeeming neglect of her. This, however, is not the only

ly caſe in which Jeſus remained ſilent, when he was expected to ſpeak; and it is poſsible that, ſurrounded as he probably was by a crowd, to one or other of whom he might be giving attention, he might not be particularly ſtruck with this woman's clamour.

24. As Jeſus did finally relieve this woman, it is evident either that what he ſaid was to be underſtood with ſome allowance, or that he exceeded the ſtrict bounds of his commiſſion. It is probable that, like Bartimeus, ſhe had been very troubleſome to the attendants of Jeſus by her loud cries, ſo that they earneſtly wiſhed that he would diſmiſs her with ſome anſwer or other. For they did not requeſt that he would ſatisfy her, but only *send her away*. But his anſwer rather implies that he underſtood them to wiſh that he would relieve her, and to this he was not bound, eſpecially as ſhe was not of Jewiſh extraction. He had, however, cured the ſervant of a Roman Centurion at Capernaum, and therefore this was no new caſe. We find alſo that, though the commiſſion of Jeſus was to the Jews, he occaſionally preached to the Samaritans. All this would tend to leſſen the prejudices of our Lord's diſciples againſt perſons of other nations, and prepare them to preach the goſpel to all the world without diſtinction, at a proper time.

26. To appearance this language was highly offenſive, but it is poſſible that notwithſtanding the words, there might be ſomething in Jeſus's manner of delivering them, that was not abſolutely forbidding. It was common with the Jews to ſpeak of themſelves as the *children* of God's family, and of other nations, as

of

of *dogs* belonging to it. This was, no doubt, well known to this woman, and therefore would not be new, or particularly offenſive. Or Jeſus might ſpeak in ſuch a manner as to give no offence at all, or even in ſuch a manner as to reprove the Jews who were preſent for uſing ſuch language; ſo much depends upon the manner in which words are ſpoken.

27. That there was nothing particularly offenſive in Jeſus uſing this language, may perhaps be inferred from this woman not being offended at it. She was ſo far from being diſcouraged with reſpect to her requeſt, that ſhe had the preſence of mind to avail herſelf of it, and thence to plead ſome right to the relief ſhe requeſted. For tho' the children had the *bread*, yet the dogs, ſhe obſerved, got ſuch *crumbs*, or fragments, as the children had to ſpare.

28. This caſe is very ſimilar to that of our Lord's curing the ſervant of the Roman Centurion at Capernaum, as he was at a diſtance from both the diſeaſed perſons at the time of their cure, and as the faith of the perſon's who applied to him was ſo great, as to draw from him a particular encomium. In theſe two inſtances of cures performed *at a diſtance*, it is evident that there could be no artifice, or any thing preconcerted with the perſons concerned.

Mark VII. 32. Theſe two diſorders neceſſarily go together. For when perſons are born *deaf*, they cannot in the uſual way be taught to *ſpeak*.

There was a great variety for which we cannot diſcover any reaſon, in the methods in which our Lord cured diſeaſes. In general, it was by merely pro-

nounc-

ing the cure, and even ſometimes, as we have ſeen, when the diſeaſed perſons were at a diſtance from him, but ſometimes he uſed particular applications, as if he wiſhed it to be underſtood that the cure was effected by ſome medical treatment, as when he made clay with his ſpittle, and with it anointed the eyes of the man who was born blind. But tho' before he was ſufficiently known this method of performing the cure might have that appearance, yet after ſo many other cures unqueſtionably miraculous, it could have no ſuch effect.

34. It is evident by our Lord's *looking up to heaven* on this occaſion, and by his devout prayer before the raiſing of Lazarus, that he always ſecretly implored the divine aſſiſtance, whenever he wrought any miracle, and that he had ſome impreſſion upon his mind, which intimated to him that his prayer was granted, before he ventured to pronounce a cure. Indeed he expreſsly ſaid that *of himself he could do nothing*, and that the *Father who was in him*, or acted by him, *did those wonderful works*. What little pretence, then, have any to ſay that Chriſt aſſumed the power of God to himſelf? No man could give leſs ground for ſuch an impious accuſation than he did.

37. The reaſon of our Lord's enjoining ſilence in this particular caſe might be his near approach to Capernaum, and the more populous part of the country of Galilee, where he was already ſo well known, that he had on a former occaſion been obliged to withdraw himſelf from the multitudes that crowded after him.

Matt.

Matt. XV. 30. The moſt aſtoniſhing of all theſe cures was that of thoſe who are called *maimed.* For there can be no doubt but that the word means perſons who wanted ſome limb, as a leg or an arm &c. and conſequently the cure muſt have been performed, by reſtoring to them, or new creating the limb that was wanting. We have no particulars, however, of any cure of this kind, no mention being made of any particular limb that was wanting, and that was reſtored in any of the caſes.

31. Chriſtians of later ages have inferred from the miracles of Jeſus that he was *God*, performing them by a power that was properly *his own.* But we ſee that the perſons who ſaw theſe miracles drew no ſuch inference from them at the time. For on this occaſion we ſee that *they glorified* not Jeſus, but *the God of Iſrael*, whom they evidently ſuppoſed to have acted by him, juſt as they would have done in the caſe of any other prophet, who ſhould have done the ſame things. For they readily conceived that *the power* was not that of any *man*, but that of *God.* As Nicodemus obſerved, no man could do thoſe miracles if God had not been with him. On occaſion of another of his miracles we read, that the perſons who ſaw it *wondered that God had given ſuch power unto man*, and therefore they concluded that *God had viſited his people*, meaning by the miſſion of another prophet, and not by himſelf becoming incarnate, being born, living and dying like a common man; for of this, no Jew had ever any idea. They never hear it mentioned without abhorrence.

SECTION XLII.

Jesus feeds four thousand Persons, discourses about a Sign from Heaven, and cures a blind Man.

Matt. XV. 32.——39. XVI. 1.——12. Mark VIII. 1——26. Luke XII. 54——57.

WE are still attending Jesus in the circuit that he made through the northern parts of Galilee, in the territories of Philip the brother of Herod; and it is somewhat remarkable that we have here an account of a repetition of the most stupendous miracle of feeding a great number of persons with a small quantity of provision, which is proof of a power equal to that by which all things were first created, and shews that no length of time is necessary to the work of creation. If both these miracles had not been related by the same evangelists, and also been distinctly referred to by Jesus himself, the difference in the other circumstances would hardly have led us to suppose that they had been really different, especially as they were performed in the same part of the country. For this transaction appears from the circumstances to have been in that part of Galilee, which lies to the East of the Sea of Tiberias, and in the northern part of it. For it was immediately upon his return from the coast of Tyre and Sidon; and after it he departed to the coast of Magdala which is in the southern part of that region.

32 On

32. On this, as on former ſimilar occaſions, we diſcover marks of the feeling, compaſſionate temper of Jeſus. This diſplay of extraordinary power, did not proceed from a principle of oſtentation, but from humanity, beſides his general object, of giving ſufficient evidence of his divine miſſion.

33. It is rather extraordinary that the diſciples, who knew what their maſter had done in theſe very circumſtances, ſhould put the ſame queſtion to him now, that they did then. But it appears that they often did not give ſufficient attention to what he ſaid or did. He complains of their *hardness of heart*, on which a ſufficient impreſſion had not been made, by theſe very miracles, as we ſhall ſee preſently. But they probably aſked the queſtion very haſtily, before they had given themſelves time to reflect at all, and in this caſe it is not ſurprizing that any particular thought ſhould be abſent from the mind.

38. That the hiſtory of this miracle is no invention of the evangeliſt is ſufficiently evident from the circumſtances of it. For it is leſs in magnitude than the preceding, the number of perſons fed being leſs, the quantity of proviſions greater, and yet what remained was not ſo much. Whereas had the ſtory been the invention of the writers, they would hardly have related a miracle of the ſame kind with another preceding it, without making ſome advances upon it, ſo that the latter ſhould have appeared the more wonderful of the two.

XVI. 1. It is evident that tho' Jeſus made no open pretenſion to his being the Meſſiah, the people in gen-

eral had entertained the idea that he might be the perſon. The Phariſees and chief prieſts certainly neither wiſhed nor believed him to be the Meſſiah; and it was probably to undeceive the people that they here, as upon another occaſion, demanded of him to ſhew them that *ſign from heaven* which is mentioned in Daniel, who ſays *that the ſon of man came in the clouds of heaven*. For as Jeſus did not make his firſt appearance in that ſplendid manner, they concluded that he never would, and therefore they probably made this propoſal in a ſneering or inſulting manner, here called *tempting him*.

3. Here our Lord enumerates the ſigns of fair and foul weather in that country, with which every body was well acquainted, and therefore he juſtly blames theſe wiſe Phariſees for giving leſs attention to the ſigns of ſome thing much more important, viz. the approach of the *kingdom of God*, for which they were looking. For as Jeſus wrought ſo many miracles, and none had been wrought, or pretended to be wrought, in that country for ſeveral centuries before his time, and as few or no perſons before John the Baptiſt had ever aſſumed the character of a prophet without working miracles, they might naturally have concluded that there was ſomething very important, as well as very extraordinary in all this; and whether it denoted the ſpeedy coming of the Meſſiah or not, it was a proof that God had again begun to ſend prophets, and, as it is elſewhere expreſſed, was *viſiting his people*; and no doubt for ſome great purpoſe or other, which demanded their particular attention.

Mark

4. Mark ſays upon this occaſion that *no ſign had been given*, and according to Matthew he ſaid nothing to explain the ſign of the prophet Jonah. But upon a former occaſion he had added that *as Jonah was three days and three nights* (or ſome part of three days) *in the belly of the fiſh*, ſo he ſhould be the ſame time *in the heart of the earth*; which was a pretty clear intimation that he ſhould lie in the grave ſo long, and no longer. This, therefore, he made the teſt of his being the Meſſiah. For he gives the Phariſees this ſign inſtead of that which they had demanded; and the ſign that they demanded was as a teſt of his being the Meſſiah.

12. We have here one of the many inſtances in which our Lord ſpake figuratively and enigmatically, taking hints from ſenſible objects. The apoſtles probably imagined that when he bade them beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and Sadducees when they wanted bread, he intended to intimate that they ſhould not buy any bread of them; and they might not know where to procure any; and he reproaches them for their ſolicitude on that ſubject, when they knew by experience that he was able to ſupply their wants, and give them bread without money.

Mark VIII. 12. *There ſhall no ſign be given.*] *ει δοθησεται.* An elliptical form of expreſſion, equivalent to an oath: As if he ſaid, *As I ſpeak the truth, no ſign ſhall be given*, &c. Pearce.

Luke XII. 54, 55. Dr. Shaw ſays that the weſterly winds in the Holy Land are ſtill generally attended with rain, but that the eaſterly winds are uſually dry. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, p. 329. Le Bruyn ſays

there was, when he was at Rama, a ſouth eaſt wind, which, coming from the deſert beyond Jordan, cauſed a great heat, and that it continued ſome days. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. I. p. 61.

Mark VIII. 26. This is another inſtance of Jeſus curing a perſon with ſome previous application, and alſo in a more private manner than uſual, for which it is not eaſy to imagine any ſufficient reaſon. He could hardly intend to make this man believe that he was cured without a miracle. It is evident, however, that he did not chuſe to work this miracle in the town of Bethſaida, the inhabitants of which he had reproached for their unbelief. He would not honour them with what they had deſpiſed, or with which they had not been ſufficiently impreſſed. He even enjoined this man not to ſpeak of his cure in the town, and for any thing that appears, he did obſerve the injunction that was laid upon him.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XVI. 9. Mark VIII. 16. How could you imagine that I was talking to you about a ſtock of bread for our uſe, and laying ſo much ſtreſs upon that circumſtance. Have you already forgot my late miracles of the multiplication of food, and do you not conſider how eaſy it muſt be for me to ſupply our wants in the ſame manner upon any emergency?

SEC-

SECTION XLIV.

Jesus begins to foretel his Sufferings.

Matt. XVI. 13——28. Mark VIII. 27——38. IX. 1. Luke IX. 18——27.

WE have attended Jesus through one excursion to the Northern parts of Galilee. We now find him once more, and for the last time, in those parts, in the territory of Philip, and here we have a very remarkable conversation with his disciples about his character, whether he was the Messiah or not. It is remarkable that this is the first time that he discoursed with them on the subject, tho' he had now preached publicly near four months, and according to the common opinion, between two and three years. This, in the circumstances in which Jesus was, was a very delicate subject, and therefore he entered upon it with none but his disciples, probably the apostles only were present. Till this time he had left not only the Jews in general, but even his own disciples, to infer *who he was*, from his works, and his conduct, and had not thought proper to make any express declaration on the subject.

13. This *Cæsarea Philippi* was a town built, or much enlarged by Philip, and called *Cæsarea*, in honour of the Roman emperor Augustus Cæsar; but to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea which had been built by Herod the great, it was called *Cæsarea Philippi*.

There muſt have been, no doubt, much ſpeculation among the Jews in general concerning Jeſus; as he not only appeared to be a prophet, but one of an extraordinary kind, performing more miracles than any preceding prophet, and after an interval of ſome hundred years, in which there had been no pretenſions to miracles or prophecy.

It is evident that the phraſe *Son of Man* here uſed by Jeſus did not neceſſarily mean the *Meſſiah*, becauſe he was then aſking the diſciples whom they took him to be. In Mark and Luke it is only *whom do men say that I am*, and therefore ſome have thought that the addition *ſon of man* in Matthew, being ſuperfluous, was not uſed by Jeſus on this occaſion. It is indeed not eaſy to ſay why Jeſus ſhould uſe this expreſſion as he does. In the Old Teſtament the phraſe *ſon of man*, generally ſignifies nothing more than *man*. If that was the idea here, it may be thus paraphraſed, "Whom do men ſay "that I, who in other reſpects am evidently a man like "themſelves, am? How am I diſtinguiſhed from other "men?" But as the phraſe *ſon of man* is peculiarly applied to the later prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, it may ſignify a man particularly diſtinguiſhed by God, as they were, or *a prophet*; and then it may be paraphraſed thus, "As the people muſt conclude that I am a prophet, "what prophet, or what kind of prophet, do they ſup-"poſe me to be."

Perhaps it ought to be rendered *Whom do men say that I am? Do they say I am the ſon of man*, i. e. *the Meſſiah?* J.

14 Con-

14. Conſidering the great reſpect that the people in general had for John the Baptiſt, it is plain that Jeſus had never been announced by him to be the Meſſiah. For then they would have had no doubt on the ſubject; and leaſt of all would they ever have imagined that John himſelf was the Meſſiah. They who could not think that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, on account of his not coming in the clouds of heaven, might naturally imagine that he was ſent before him, and therefore was Elias.

The conjecture that Jeſus might be *Jeremiah* is not mentioned by Mark or Luke, but it is poſſible that, as ſome Jews imagined that Jeremiah would appear in the time of the Meſſiah, to diſcover the place of the ark of the covenant, which had been in the temple of Solomon, but was not in that which was built afterwards, they might think that he would riſe from the dead, and appear together with Elias. It is remarkable that, among all theſe different opinions, the apoſtles ſhould not obſerve, that ſome thought Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, which it is evident that many did. But this being their own ſecret opinion, or fond hope, and expecting great advantages to themſelves from it, they might not chuſe to mention it, as it would declare their own ambitious views.

We ſee on this occaſion how familiar to the Jews was the idea of a reſurrection. They did not think that the ſouls of thoſe prophets inhabited the body of Jeſus, but thought him to be the men themſelves riſen from the dead.

15 It

15. It is evident from this queſtion that the diſciples of Jeſus had never been expreſsly informed, either by John the Baptiſt, or by Jeſus, that he was the Meſſiah. For then it would have been altogether impertinent. This is a great confirmation of the opinion advanced, and ably ſupported by Mr. Palmer, that John himſelf did not know that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, but only that he was a greater prophet than himſelf.

17. This was not probably any proper revelation from God to Peter. If it had, there would have been no ground for ſo particular a commendation as Jeſus beſtows upon him. But the opinion that he expreſſed aroſe from his own reflections. His mind being free from thoſe prejudices which led the Scribes and Phariſees, who were worldly minded men, to conclude that Jeſus could not be the Meſſiah, Peter was not hindered by the ſame appearances, viz. that of his not aſſuming kingly power, to form a truer judgment than they did.

18. *Gates of death.*] Public aſſemblies and conſultations were held near the gates of cities; ſo that the phraſe means that the wiſdom and devices of thoſe who have the power of death ſhall not prevail againſt chriſtianity, or, in other words, the religion of Chriſt ſhall never be extinct in the world; and certainly there is far from being any proſpect of its ever being ſo.

19. *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, &c.] The power of *binding and loosing*, may ſignify the power that devolved upon the apoſtles of making regulations reſpecting the chriſtian church after

ter our Lord's aſcenſion, or a power, which they exerciſed when aſſembled at Jeruſalem on the ſubject of eating things forbidden by the law of Moſes. But perhaps theſe words may not denote any power to be exerted at the diſcretion of Peter, or the other apoſtles; but only the power of God, or of the Goſpel that was committed to them. God ſays to Jeremiah, Ch. i. 10. *See I have ſet thee this day over the nations; to root out, and pull down, and to deſtroy, and to throw down; to build and plant;* when all that was meant was that God would commiſſion him from time to time to foretel the fates of particular nations, and nothing at all was left to his diſcretion in the caſe. A like interpretation may ſerve for John xx, 23. *Whoſesoever ſins you remit*, &c.

A key was given to the ſteward of a family, as an emblem of his office.

20. Notwithſtanding Jeſus's acknowledgment that he was the Meſſiah, he thought proper ſtrictly to enjoin his diſciples not to make it public, that is, as his own declaration. The reaſon of this evidently was, that he might not be brought under great and unneceſſary difficulties, both with reſpect to the Jews and the Romans. For in the opinion of both, it would have been conſidered as the ſame thing with making himſelf a king. The apoſtles, however, would naturally infer from it, that at ſome proper future time, he would appear as a temporal prince, and in this opinion he choſe that they ſhould continue. They were not then prepared to underſtand the doctrine of a Meſſiah, who, tho' he might ſuffer, was not alſo to reign like other princes.

22 After

22. After the acknowledgment of Jeſus that he was the Meſſiah, nothing could have appeared more improbable than that he ſhould be put to death. For tho' it is ſaid in Daniel that the Meſſiah was to be *cut off*, it is plain that no Jew had ſo underſtood it. However, as Jeſus ſaid that he ſhould be *raiſed again*, his being put to death was not abſolutely inconſiſtent with his being a king. But the apoſtles did not ſee any reaſon for his being put to death at all, if, after this, he was ſo ſoon to come to life again.

23. How different is the language in which Jeſus ſpeaks of Peter upon his acknowledging him to be the Meſſiah, and his expreſſing an averſion to the idea of his ſuffering, tho' they both proceeded from a principle of reſpect to his maſter. But it is evident that when Peter expreſſed his averſion to the ſufferings of Jeſus, he had no idea of his being himſelf a ſufferer in his cauſe, tho' on many occaſions Jeſus had fully apprized all his diſciples of the neceſſity of this, and of their being prepared for it. He therefore takes this occaſion of ſolemnly forewarning them of it again.

We ſee here that by the word *Satan*, which is ſynonimous to *Devil* our Saviour did not mean any great inviſible being, the rival of almighty God, which is the idea that mankind generally have of the devil, but any thing that was *evil*. For here he calls Peter himſelf *Satan*, as before he had called Judas the *Devil*, being men under the influence of improper thoughtsor paſſions.

26. Here our Lord urges the great importance of all his followers being prepared to ſuffer as he ſhould do.

And

And if his diſciples had not ſhewn their faith in his miſſion by dying for it, chriſtianity could never have been eſtabliſhed in the world. It has been juſtly ſaid that "the blood of the martyrs was the ſeed of the "church." To ſecure a future immortal life we ought not to heſitate, if we be called to it, to give up the preſent tranſitory life.

That the word in the original ſhould be rendered *life* and not *ſoul* is evident from its being the very ſame that is uſed in the preceding verſe, where it is ſo rendered, *whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it*. If the word ſignified *ſoul* as a thing diſtinct from the body, it ought to have been rendered, *whoſoever will ſave his ſoul ſhall loſe it*, It is plain therefore that by *life* Jeſus here meant not *mere exiſtence*, for the wicked ſhall exiſt after the reſurrection as well as the righteous, but an endleſs and happy life; and therefore when upon another occaſion he ſays, that *God can deſtroy both the body and the ſoul*, or the life of the body, *in hell*, he meant that he could ſubject him to a *ſecond death* or make him miſerable in a future ſtate.

28. It is plain from this paſſage, that Jeſus had no idea of his coming in glory, or in his kingdom, except to raiſe the dead and judge the world; and therefore it is probable that at this time he himſelf expected that this glorious event would take place ſooner than it has appeared to do. The deſtruction of Jeruſalem did happen in that generation, as he himſelf diſtinctly foretold, which ſufficiently proves that he was a true prophet, but he might think his coming in glory would be preſently after

after that event, and this might lead the apoſtles and the early chriſtians in general to expect the near approach of the ſecond coming of Chriſt. This miſtake might be wiſely permitted in the courſe of divine providence, as the minds of the primitive chriſtians might have been too much ſtaggered at the idea of the very great *diſtance* of that important event, the *certainty* of which was all that Jeſus himſelf had been informed of, for as to the time of it he expreſsly ſaid that it was not known to himſelf but *to the Father only*; ſo that on this ſubject it is evident that he had been left to his own conjectures, and how ſtrongly ſoever he might have expreſſed his *opinion* on the ſubject, he had ſufficiently apprized his diſciples that it could be no other than his private opinion, and not any thing that he was authorized by God to declare, as from him.

Mark VIII. 38. *Adulterous generation.*] It does not neceſſarily follow from this expreſſion, that the Jews were particularly guilty of adultery, though in this literal ſenſe the cenſure would be abundantly juſtified by Joſephus's account of the morals of the Jews in his time; but the Jewiſh nation being figuratively repreſented by the antient prophets as in a *marriage contract* with God, every ſin, was, in the ſame figurative ſtyle, a breach of that contract.

Ibid. *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me*, &c.] I would recommend this aweful warning to the particular conſideration of chriſtians in this age, in which ſo many perſons of eminence in the world, and eſpecially in literature and philoſophy, are ſceptics and unbelievers, and

and in which, therefore, the temptation to be aſhamed of the chriſtian name is, in ſome circumſtances, peculiarly ſtrong. In this ſituation it is highly criminal to deny, or conceal our real belief of chriſtianity, or whatever we conſider as belonging to it. And thankful we ought to be that this is the greateſt part of the perſecution that we have at this day to expect. Our anceſtors had much greater trials.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XVI. 17. This conviction of my being the Meſſiah comes from a better principle than the generality of the Jews are influenced by, and muſt have ariſen from an upright unprejudiced mind, which comes from God the giver of every good and every perfect gift. 18. I have ſurnamed thee Peter, which ſignifies a *rock*, and, in alluſion to it, I now aſſure thee, that upon this rock, upon thy teſtimony and apoſtleſhip, together with that of thy brethren, I will build a church, againſt which no devices of men ſhall prevail, but it ſhall continue till the end of time. 19. As my principal ſteward, I will now entruſt thee with the keys of my houſe. At my departure there will be delegated to you the commiſſion under which I now act, ſo that all future revelations reſpecting doctrine, or diſcipline, in my church ſhall proceed from your authority, and an appeal to you ſhall be final.

SEC.

SECTION XLV.

The Transfiguration, the Cure of the Demoniac, and the Payment of the Tribute.

Matt. XVII. 1——27. Mark IX. 2——32. Luke IX. 28——45. XVII. 5, 6.

WE are now come to an event in the hiſtory of Jeſus, of a very extraordinary and ſingular kind. But his character and ſituation were ſingular, and no doubt required it. It is what is called his *transfiguration*, probably a kind of ſpecimen of his future glorious appearance, when he ſhould come in his kingdom. That he was ſometimes much affected with the proſpect of his approaching ſufferings, appears from many circumſtances; and his apoſtles, we have lately ſeen, were greatly ſtaggered at the idea of them. This exhibition therefore might be neceſſary to ſtrengthen their faith, and his own too.

1. i. e. ſix days from the diſcourſe concerning his ſufferings, which had no doubt been the ſubject of their thoughts and converſation in the mean time.

This is the ſecond time that Jeſus diſtinguiſhed theſe three perſons, by making choice of them to be preſent, when the other apoſtles were not admitted to attend him. But, it is evident that whatever might be the reaſon why he choſe no more attendants at theſe times, it was not on account of any *ſecrets* that he communicated to them, which would give them any advantage

tage over others. For it does not appear that they had any more knowledge or power than the rest of the apostles. And tho' upon this occasion these three were enjoined secrecy with respect to what they heard and saw, it was only to continue till his resurrection. These were quite sufficient as witnesses of the fact, and Peter, who was present, has himself recorded it, 2 Peter, i, 16, &c. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.* It is evident from this account that Peter considered the transfiguration as a representation of what Jesus would be in his glorified state.

3. Luke adds, that *these also appeared in glory*, and that their discourse was about the *decease which Jesus should accomplish at Jerusalem*, encouraging him no doubt to bear his sufferings, by giving him, in their own persons, a proof of the reality, and likewise of the kind of future life which they themselves enjoyed. As Moses and Elias appeared in glory as well as Jesus, there was nothing in this scene that shews Christ to have been more than man. Perhaps it was a splendour reflected from such a bright cloud as had been in former times the symbol of the divine presence, in consequence of which Moses at one time appeared so resplendent that the people could not bear to look upon him.

If this was the caſe the three apoſtles would have the ſame appearance with Jeſus, and theſe two prophets. This, I think, was probably the caſe. Whatever this glory was, Peter ſays that Jeſus *received it from God the Father*, as he did every other power by which he was diſtinguiſhed.

4. Mark adds, *For he knew not what to say, for they were ſore afraid.* As Mark was the companion of Peter, and is ſaid to have had his accounts from him, this was probably a circumſtance communicated to him by this apoſtle. And no doubt all the three would at firſt be greatly affected and overpowered by ſuch an appearance as this. The ſight of two men, and men ſo extraordinary as theſe, raiſed from the dead, with or without theſe peculiar circumſtances, would be more than many perſons would be able to ſupport.

This cloud was ſimilar to that which had been the token of the divine preſence from the time of Moſes; and it is ſo mentioned in the Old Teſtament, that it could not but have been well underſtood by the apoſtles. On ſeveral occaſions an articulate voice, as from God, had been heard, proceeding from ſuch a cloud. This is the ſecond time that Jeſus had been honoured by this atteſtation of his being *the beloved Son of God*, and by a voice from heaven; the former time being at his baptiſm, probably in the preſence of a great number of perſons.

7. With this voice from heaven it is evident that this extraordinary ſcene cloſed. Luke ſays that the voice came as Moſes and Elias departed from Jeſus, and after they had been *heavy with ſleep*, exhauſted no

doubt

doubt by the great attention which they had given to what they had ſeen and heard, which ſeems to have been of long continuance. For it does not appear that they made any unneceſſary ſtay upon the mount, and they did not come down from it till the next day. Indeed the idea of making three tents for the conveniency of Jeſus, Moſes, and Elias, would hardly have occured to Peter in a ſcene of ſhort continuance, but would naturally enough, after paſſing the whole night on the top of a mountain, even ſuppoſing them to have felt no inconvenience from that circumſtance.

9. Had the apoſtles reported what they had ſeen, it would have been ſuch a proof of Jeſus being the Meſſiah, as would have been attended with much inconvenience; and that theſe three apoſtles conſidered that appearance in that light is evident from their immediately queſtioning him concerning *Elias*, who was to make his appearance before the Meſſiah.

Mark adds, that *they kept this saying among themſelves, questioning one another, what the rising from the dead should mean*; plainly not underſtanding Jeſus in a literal ſenſe, which would have implied his ſuffering a literal death, of which it is evident that notwithſtanding what Jeſus had ſaid on that ſubject, they did not entertain an idea. For preſently after this, we find two of thoſe who were preſent, James and John, petitioning to ſit on his right hand, and on his left, in his kingdom, taking it no doubt to be a proper earthly kingdom, very ſoon to be ſet up.

10. It is evident that the apoſtles did not conſider

this appearance of Elias on the mount, as that which was to precede the appearance of the Meſſiah.

11. *Reſtore all things ;*] i. e. put them into order for the coming of the Meſſiah.

It is ſomething remarkable that both Moſes and Elijah had, like Jeſus, faſted forty days, the one when he gave the law to the Iſraelites, and the other when he attempted to recover them to a due regard to their law, after a time of great degeneracy. It is obſervable alſo that Elijah had been tranſlated to heaven without dying, and if it be ſaid of Moſes that he *died* in the mount, to which God called him, yet he went up in perfect health, and vigour, no body was permitted to accompany him, and his place of burial could never be found. It is, therefore, not improbable that he never *properly died*, but was tranſlated alſo. Since, however, he was with Jeſus on the mount of tranſfiguration, in company with Elijah, we may preſume that they were in the ſame ſtate, and conſequently that Moſes, as well as Enoch and Elijah, are now living with Chriſt. Whether theſe be all his attendants of the human race, where they are, or how they are employed, we cannot tell, and it concerns us not to know. All his faithful diſciples and followers will receive the joyful ſummons to attend him at a proper time.

13. It is clear that before this time the diſciples of Jeſus had no knowledge of John the baptiſt being Elias, and John himſelf did not know it. For when he was ſolemnly aſked it by a deputation from the Scribes and Phariſees from Jeruſalem, he denied that he was the Meſſiah or Elias. Perhaps Jeſus himſelf, without having

having had any divine illumination on the ſubject, might have concluded that John was Elias, from himſelf being the Meſſiah; and there are who think that Elijah in perſon will make his appearance before that *great and terrible day of the Lord*, which is yet to come, and to precede thoſe glorious times, which are the ſubject of ſo many prophecies of Iſaiah and others. But concerning this, and many other things relating to future times, we are, and no doubt wiſely, left in the dark. As the primitive chriſtians however were warned by Jeſus and the apoſtles of the approach of the time of diſtreſs that was before them, it behoves us alſo to have an eye to the ſigns of the times, and if Daniel be a true prophet of which none here I preſume entertain any doubt, the times which are to precede the reſtoration of the Jews to their own country and which will probably be attended with the fall of the Papal and Turkiſh powers, will be exceedingly calamitous.

Dan. XII. 1. And there ſhall be a time of trouble ſuch as there never was ſince there was a nation, even to that ſame time, and at that time thy people ſhall be delivered. Happy are they who believing in God and doing his will are prepared for all events.

While Jeſus was upon the mount, on which he was transfigured, accompanied by Peter, James and John, we find the other apoſtles much embarraſſed about the cure of a demoniac, and alſo in altercation with the Scribes and Phariſees, from which his preſence happily relieved them.

14. Mark adds other circumſtances which throw light on this part of the hiſtory, and ſerve to explain the

account of Matthew. He ſays, Ch. ix 15, *And straight way all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, ſaluted him, and he asked the Scribes, why question ye with them?* What could be the cauſe of the people's amazement does not appear. But as Jeſus had probably ſpent a whole day and night on the mountain, abſent from the greater number of his apoſtles, their ſurprize might be at this unuſual circumſtance; and as he was always performing benevolent actions, they would naturally rejoice to ſee him again, after their diſappointment in not ſeeing him ſooner. The altercation of the Scribes and Phariſees with the diſciples might have been occaſioned by their failing to relieve the demoniac who had been brought to them, but of the nature of the diſpute we are not informed.

15 From theſe circumſtances it is moſt probable that the diſeaſe with which this youth was afflicted, was the *epilepſy*, which together with other frightful and incurable diſorders, were by the Jews and others of that age, aſcribed to the influence of evil ſpirits.

16. Perhaps the diſciples had proceeded to this important work without due humility and reverence, commanding the cure in an imperious manner, as oſtentatious of their power; and eſpecially without waiting for that peculiar impulſe, which was an indication of the power of God accompanying them.

17. The terms *unbelieving* and *perverse*, being our Lord's deſcription of the Phariſees and Scribes; it is probable that theſe words were not addreſſed to his diſciples, but to thoſe who had been diſputing with them.

them. Perhaps as theſe apoſtles had not been able to cure this child, theſe Phariſees had queſtioned the power of Jeſus himſelf, whoſe name had no doubt been made uſe of, in order to perform the cure. It is not at all probable that Jeſus addreſſed this language to the father of the child, who had from the firſt behaved with humility and propriety, eſpecially in his anſwers to the queſtions that Jeſus put to him on the ſubject, as we have the account in Mark Ch. ix, 20—24. It is clear from theſe particulars that there was no perverſeneſs or obſtinacy in the father, who had, no doubt, brought his afflicted child with hopes of relief from the power of Jeſus, and who alſo prayed that if his own faith was not ſufficient to entitle him to the benefit, Jeſus would increaſe it, without, perhaps, having any diſtinct idea how that was to be done. But his faith would no doubt be increaſed by Jeſus encouraging him.

18. This is a diſorder that is never cured except by a treatment of ſome continuance, and ſuch ſorts of the epilepſy as theſe are very apt to return after a ſeeming cure. But of this child ſo dreadfully afflicted in this manner, it is ſaid that he was completely cured, by which is implied that there was no return of theſe fits.

20. i. e. The ſmalleſt quantity of this faith would enable them to do the greateſt things. But they had proceeded to this miracle without waiting for the divine impulſe, which produced this faith.

21. This verſe is omitted in ſome MSS. and in the Ethiopic verſion. W.

This kind, not of dæmons, but of faith (for that is the ſubject he is ſpeaking of, and blaming the diſci-

place for wanting it) *could not cast out*, i. e. exerted not itself in such miraculous operations *but by prayer and fasting*, i. e. the exercise of fervent devotion.

In fact, however, it comes to the same thing, whether we say that such *diseases* cannot be cured but by previous prayer and fasting, or that the *faith* necessary to their miraculous cure cannot be exerted without the same preparation.

22. Whether *this kind* refers to the demon, or to the *faith*, by which the demons are expelled, the sense is ultimately the same. So important a gift as this of healing those diseases, would not be imparted without prayer; and it is evident, as I have observed before, that prayer, at least mental, always preceded the working of miracles by Jesus himself. We may easily conceive that it would have been highly improper that a power of working miracles of any kind should be so imparted to any man, as to be at his arbitrary disposal, so that he might have exercised it whenever he pleased.

23. This is the second time that we have had an account of Jesus distinctly foretelling his sufferings, death and resurrection; but still we find that the apostles did not understand him in the literal sense of his words. For Mark says (ch. ix, 32, *But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.* Probably they imagined that some great misfortune would befal him, but from which he would soon recover, so as still to appear in the character of a king.

24. By the law of Moses every person was to pay half a shekel annually, to defray the expences of the temple

temple ſervice, and the ſhekel was four Drachmas, each about eight pence of our money.

26. This tribute was paid, as it were to God, and therefore Jeſus claiming to be the ſon of God, might, according to this reaſoning, have been exempted.

27. This miracle is of the ſame nature with that of changing water into wine, walking upon the ſea, and ſtilling the tempeſt. It ſhewed the perfect knowledge that Jeſus had of events, and the powers that were given him over the laws of nature. For certainly no man, without ſupernatural communication, could have foretold that any particular fiſh, that ſhould happen to be caught at any particular time, ſhould have a piece of money, and particularly a piece of a certain value, in its ſtomach. It may be thought from Jeſus working this miracle, that his wants were not abundantly ſupplied at this particular time. But there are other circumſtances that I have mentioned, which ſhew that our Lord's apoſtles were not perſons in a very low and deſtitute condition, but were poſſeſſed of ſome property; ſo that the raiſing of ſo ſmall a ſum as this could not have been any difficulty to him. Jeſus himſelf probably carried no money, and Peter, who might be then alone with Jeſus, might not happen to have any; and a miracle of this kind was calculated to confirm the faith of Peter and the other apoſtles in his divine miſſion, by ſhewing that they had nothing to dread while they continued attached to him. As he had ſupplied them with *proviſions*, ſo he could ſupply them with every thing elſe that they ſhould want. They might therefore conclude that if they were left deſtitute of any thing

thing, it was becauſe it was proper for them to be in thoſe circumſtances, and that the cauſe of the goſpel required it; and that it was no proof of a want of power or affection in their maſter; for as God gave all things freely to him, ſo he would to them. As God had ſent him into the world, ſo he ſent them into the world, and the glory which God gave to him, he gave to them.

Here the word *offend* probably ſignifies the ſame that it uſually does in our language, viz. to give occaſion to perſons to take offence at us, or to be diſpleaſed and cavil at our conduct.

Mark IX. 12. *And that, as it is written,* &c.] This rendering, ſays Pearce, is agreable to the Alexandrian and other MSS. and makes a better ſenſe. Or the clauſes of this verſe may be tranſpoſed and read as follows, *Elias is come as it is written of him, and they have done unto him whatsoever they liſted.*

13. The clauſe *as it is written of him*, ought probably to follow the mention of *Elias being come*; his coming only, and not any thing that would be done to him, being foretold by the prophets. C.

Luke IX. 32. *Heavy with ſleep.*] Probably their ſenſes were overpowered with a kind of *ſtupor*, reſembling ſleep, but were not really aſleep, but capable of giving attention to what paſſed before them. Matthew and Mark ſay nothing of this heavineſs. Dr. Benſon would tranſlate the paſſage as follows; *But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep; yet continuing awake, they ſaw his glory*, &c. Life of Chriſt, p. 318.

Luke

Luke XVII. 6. *The sycamore,*] Dr. Shaw ſays, *Travels.* p. 435, is one of the common timber trees of the Holy Land, and from having a larger and more extenſive root than moſt other trees, it is alluded to as the moſt difficult to be rooted up.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XVI 26. If it be cuſtomary for princes to take tribute of ſtrangers, and not of their own children, this tax, which is expreſsly levied for the peculiar ſervice of the temple, or the houſe of God, ought not to be levied on the Son of God. I ought, therefore, to be exempted from paying it, but I ſhall not inſiſt upon this privilege:

SECTION XLVI.

Jesus discourses with his Disciples concerning Humility and Forgiveness.

Matt XVIII. 1——35. Mark IX. 33——48. Luke IX. 46——48. XVII. 1——4. IX. 49, 50.

IT is ſomething remarkable that at the very time when Jeſus was informing his apoſtles of his ſufferings and death, they ſhould ſtill imagine that he would be a temporal prince; and as ſuch princes muſt have officers, perſons of high rank and power about them, they ſhould be diſputing among themſelves who ſhould fill them. But we are told that plainly as he ſpoke

ſpoke to them on the ſubject, they really did not underſtand him in the literal ſenſe of his words; imagining probably that as he was uſed to ſpeak in parables, and make uſe of ſtrong figures of ſpeech, he had ſome figurative meaning in what he ſaid on this ſubject. And as he ſpoke of his *reſurrection* as ſoon to follow his *death*, they might imagine that whatever were the difficulties through which he was to paſs in the way to his advancement, which difficulties might be ſignified by his *death*, he would ſoon ſurmount them all. And as he ſpeaks of theſe ſufferings as near at hand, they would of courſe conclude that his advancement to power, which was ſoon to follow them, was at hand alſo. Conſequently the very diſcourſe which might ſeem calculated to lower their expectations, and lead them to think of *ſuffering* with their maſter, would naturally enough lead them to think of *reigning* with him, and that in this world. For the Jews had no idea of their Meſſiah having any other kingdom than ſuch as David's, whoſe deſcendant he was to be.

1. Matthew here repreſents the diſcourſe as begun by the diſciples; whereas Mark and Luke ſay that it was begun by Jeſus, who, knowing what they had been ſaying among themſelves, ſpoke to their ſentiments and inward feelings. The account of Matthew is moſt probable, becauſe he was preſent, and the miſapprehenſion of the other evangeliſts is of no conſequence.

4. i. e. "Except you diveſt yourſelves of the ambitious views which you now entertain, and of the envy and jealouſy of one another, which has occaſioned this

"this altercation, and become as free from every thing "of the kind as a child, ſo far will you be from advance- "ment in the kingdom of heaven, that you will not be "permitted to enter into it, or to ſhare in any of the "bleſſings of it. In anſwer to your queſtion, I muſt "therefore inform you that the greateſt in my king- "dom is he whoſe temper and diſpoſition ſhall ap- "proach the neareſt to this child, which I now ſet be- "fore you."

6. Jeſus having repreſented the diſpoſition of his followers as reſembling that of little children, and comparing his diſciples to children liable to receive harm, but incapable of inflicting it, forwarns men of the conſequence of their behaviour to them. For, as he obſerves upon another occaſion, whatever ſhall be done to them, he will conſider as done to himſelf.

Since the phraſe to *receive* and to *offend* are here oppoſed to each other, it is probable that tho' in general the phraſe *to offend* means to be the occaſion of a fall to another, it ſometimes ſignifies doing them an injury of any other kind, as it ſeems to do when our Lord ſays, *leſt we offend them*, i. e. the Jewiſh rulers, viz, hurt their prejudices, and thereby give them occaſion to be offended at us, and cavil at us.

9. *Offend thee*;] i. e. be the occaſion of ſin to thee.

What our Lord was led to ſay on the ſubject of *offences*, from having ſpoken of offending one of his weak and child-like diſciples, is ſimilar to what he obſerved in his ſermon on the mount. The meaning of it is, that let any thing we have be ever ſo dear to us, it is better to part with it, than that it ſhould be the occaſion

ſion of ſin in us, becauſe the gain or advantage we can receive from it is only temporary, whereas the loſs and diſadvantage is eternal.

10. *Their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven*] i e. God takes eſpecial care of them, the Jews probably imagining that particular perſons had their guardian angels. *Seeing the face of God* repreſents, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſt, a ſtate of peculiar honour and favour, ſuch as the principal officers of a court have with a ſovereign prince.

Here Jeſus reverts to the ſubject of the meek and humble appearance of his diſciples.

11. This ſubject is not the ſame with that with which it is connected, but ſimilar to it. Jeſus having repreſented his diſciples as weak and helpleſs, expoſed to injuries, now conſiders them as perſons who had been given up for *loſt*, and as of no account whatever, till they were recovered to virtue and happineſs by his doctrine.

14. The meaning of this beautiful parable cannot be that the Supreme Being has more ſatisfaction, as we may ſay, in the recovery of one perſon from vice and wickedneſs, than in the perſevering of many in a ſtate of virtue. The concluſion does not expreſs ſo much as this, but only that it is not his will that any ſhould periſh. It is true however that when any part of our property is loſt, we naturally give more attention to it, than to that which we apprehend to be ſafe, and therefore the recovery of it gives us more ſenſible pleaſure than our enjoyment of what has never been loſt. And as we cannot conceive of God, but as of a being who feels

as we

we do, ſuch human ſentiments are here transferred to God, tho' ſtrictly ſpeaking they can have no place in him, becauſe he, knowing all things, and ſeeing the end from the beginning, cannot conſider any thing as *loſt* that is ever *recovered*.

15. Jeſus having diſcourſed concerning *offences* and of perſons being loſt to virtue and recovered again, now ſpeaks of ſuch offences as men are apt to give one another, and of proper conduct on ſuch occaſions, in which he recommended the greateſt prudence and forbearance, joined to the moſt unfeigned love to our brother, and the moſt perſevering attempts to recover him to a ſenſe of his duty.

17. *If he neglect to hear thee*, &c.] The ſenſe that I have given to theſe words in the paraphraſe, reſpecting the power that would devolve upon the officers of the chriſtian church after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, cannot, I think, be extended beyond the apoſtles, except in a ſenſe that reduces the meaning to almoſt nothing, much below what we cannot but ſuppoſe the emphatical words in which it is expreſſed were intended to convey.

In this chapter we have ſomething like a continued and connected diſcourſe of Jeſus, addreſſed to the twelve, ſince the whole may be ſaid to relate to the *doctrine of offences*. But as the different articles under this general ſubject relate to offences in different ſenſes of the word, and the contiguous parts of the diſcourſe have little relation to each other, I think it probable that, upon this occaſion, as well as with reſpect to the ſermon on the mount, and that which relates to the miſſion of

the

the twelve, the evangelist has brought together whatever Jesus had said upon this subject at different times, tho' there is nothing improbable in supposing that he might have delivered the whole at once. The evangelists were not solicitous about the exact order of their narratives, and as they wrote a long time after the transactions, it is probable that they did not exactly remember in what order and place their master had delivered particular instructions and parables, tho' they could not forget the instructions and parables themselves. What we are now entering upon relates to the doctrine of *forgiveness of injuries*, which has a connection with that concerning *offences* treated of before.

21. The mention of Peter coming to Jesus in this place looks as if they had not been a connected discourse, and as if Peter might have been absent when the preceding part of it was delivered. But as it was the custom of Jesus, as well as of the Jews in general, to sit when he taught, probably on a raised seat, and his hearers, where it was convenient, might sit also, after the oriental manner, on the ground, Peter might rise and approach to Jesus, in order to ask this question.

There is something particular in Peter's pitching upon the number *seven*, but it is thought to have arisen from the decision of the Jewish Rabbis, some of which were founded on nothing but the literal interpretation of passages of Scripture. Thus because it is said in the prophet Amos Chap. i, 3. *for three transgressions and for four I will not turn away my wrath*, some of them said that *three* offences would be forgiven, but not

not a *fourth*; and ſo others probably putting the *three* and *four* together, might be of opinion that God would forgive *ſeven times*, and therefore that men ought to do ſo too. For it ſeems to have been taken for granted, that the divine proceedings in this caſe, was a proper pattern for ours.

22. This reply of Jeſus ſhews that it is abſurd to have reſpect to any particular numbers, but only to the nature of the caſe, and that true repentance was always entitled to forgiveneſs, tho' the offence ſhould have been repeated ever ſo often. But then it muſt be acknowledged that the frequent repetition of an offence is no argument of a ſincere repentance. To illuſtrate the doctrine of forgiveneſs, to ſhew the great extent, and withal the natural and neceſſary limitations of it, Jeſus proceeds to relate the following very inſtructive parable.

35. We learn from this parable, in the firſt place, that forgiveneſs, on the part of God, is properly and abſolutely free. The ſervant acknowledges his debt, and promiſes payment, but his maſter ſeeing his good intentions and inability, had compaſſion upon him, and forgave him the debt. Thus you ſee there was no interference on the part of any perſon, none to be ſurety for the debtor, to make the payment for him. How abſurd then, and how unworthy of the Divine Being, is the popular doctrine of *atonement*, which ſuppoſes that God pardons no ſin till a complete ſatisfaction is made to his juſtice by Chriſt, who takes upon himſelf the puniſhment of every ſuch ſin. Sure this could not

properly be called *forgiveness*. Is a debt ever ſaid to be forgiven, when another pays it for the debtor?

Beſides, this parable goes upon the idea that we ought to imitate the conduct of the Divine Being, in forgiving others, as he forgives us. For with this admonition the parable cloſes, *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.* But if we were to imitate the divine conduct, as repreſented in the doctrine of atonement, we ought never to forgive till our juſtice, or vengeance, be ſatisfied; if not by the offender himſelf, by ſome other for him. But what would the common ſenſe of mankind ſay to ſuch conduct as this? Would they not declare it to be cruel and inhuman, and that ſuch men were utter ſtrangers to forgiveneſs or mercy. Far, therefore, be this conduct from the ever bleſſed God. According to the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures, and all the parables of our Saviour, which deſcribe his character, as that of the father and the prodigal ſon, as well as that of this creditor, God forgives *freely* in the proper ſenſe of the word, requiring no ſatisfaction beſides repentance and amendment.

It is remarkable that this doctrine of *atonement* was not, like that of the *Trinity*, ſtarted in an early period, and compleated in the ſpace of about four hundred years. For it was unknown in its full extent till after the reformation, when it was advanced in oppoſition to the Popiſh doctrine of *merit*, which was made the foundation of indulgences.

The

The ſecond thing that we learn from this parable is that the pardon of ſin is always conditional. Tho' this debtor is ſaid to have been forgiven, and his debt to have been diſcharged; yet, on the diſcovery of his inhumanity, and unrelenting temper towards his fellow ſervant, he is charged with it again. In like manner God's final treatment of us will depend upon the temper and diſpoſition that we ſhew, not at any particular time, but to the cloſe of our lives; and no particular ſin is ever fully pardoned till the general tenor of a man's conduct ſhall ſhow that he is deſerving of the divine favour.

Mark IX. 38. *Caſting out dæmons in thy name.*] Thoſe might be ſuch perſons as acted the ſame part with the ſons of Sceva, mentioned Acts xix. 13. and God might permit their adjurations in the name of Jeſus to take effect for the preſent, but not when they were uſed in direct oppoſition to the apoſtles. But it is poſſible that theſe Jews were only attempting, but without ſucceſs, to caſt out dæmons in the name of Jeſus.

40. It ſeems to be taken for granted in this place, that dæmons were caſt out by thoſe who were not the profeſſed diſciples of Chriſt, on merely uſing his name; and yet as the apoſtles themſelves could not always do this, we can hardly ſuppoſe it to have been the caſe. It is more probable that theſe people, who, like their countrymen, and other perſons of that age, had great faith in *charms*, or the power of certain words, pronounced in a certain manner, imagined that by uſing the name of *Jeſus* in their invocations, they could terrify and expel thoſe dæmons; and the remark of Jeſus is

equally juſt, whether the cure was actually performed or not. For perſons attempting only to perform cures in the name of Jeſus, muſt acknowledge ſome reſpect for him, and therefore would not *lightly ſpeak evil of him*; ſo that whatever they meant, they really did him honour.

41. There ſeems to be little real connection between this obſervation and the preceding one, tho' it is joined to it by the particle *for*, as if it was the reaſon of what was advanced before. Probably the evangeliſt recollecting this ſaying of Jeſus, after having written his goſpel, and not knowing where to introduce it better, placed it here. The evangeliſts were not writers by profeſſion, and therefore may well be ſuppoſed to have found themſelves in ſituations like this, without knowing how to do better, and as nothing material depended upon mere exactneſs of arrangement, they would not be ſolicitous about it.

Niebuhr ſays that among the public buildings at Cairo, there are houſes where they daily give water to all ſtrangers who deſire it.

43, 44, 46. *The worm dieth not &c.*] This alludes to the conſumption of dead bodies by worms, when they are buried, as well as ſometimes by fire. A fire that ſhall not be quenched, means a fire that ſhall entirely conſume what is committed to it. So future puniſhments will not be remitted till they have completely anſwered the end for which they are inflicted, whether that be the deſtruction, or purification of the ſinner.

PAR-

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XVII. 10. Do not think meanly of the leaſt of my diſciples, for they are miniſtered unto by angels, and even thoſe angels which are in the greateſt favour with God, and ſtand in his preſence, ready to execute his moſt important commiſſions.

17. Whenever any fellow chriſtian, or nominal member of my church, ſhall be found to be irreclaimable, he muſt be ſolemnly cut off from your communion, and be conſidered by you as one of the world at large, with whom you have no particular connection. 18. When I am removed from you, the powers that I now have will devolve upon you by the deſcent of the Holy Spirit; and whatever you do by the direction of that Spirit ſhall be ratified in heaven. 19. And as the Father hears me always, ſo alſo when you, under the influence of the ſame Spirit, ſhall join in prayer for any thing that is ſubſervient to the advancement of true religion, your petition ſhall certainly be heard. 20. For whenever ſo few of you are aſſembled as chriſtians, for any purpoſe that reſpects my religion, it is the ſame thing as if I myſelf was there; ſo that your prayers, and your acts, will have the ſame force as my own.

SEC.

SECTION XLVII.

Jesus takes his final leave of Galilee, in order to go to Judea. James and John would call for fire from heaven upon some Samaritans.

Matt. XIX. 1. Luke XIII. 31——35. IX. 51——56
John VII. 2——10.

JESUS having now discharged the purpose of his mission in Galilee, is about to leave it, in order to spend the remainder of his time in Judea, the southern part of the country; tho' he had not failed to visit Jerusalem both at the passover, and the feast of Pentecost preceding. And his miracles had been seen by so many persons, and were so much talked of, that it cannot be supposed that any inhabitant of Judea had been without sufficient opportunity of informing himself concerning them; and therefore his visiting many places in Judea towards the close of his ministry, was not so necessary as his going about to different places in Galilee. If he *had* done it, there was no occasion for the evangelist to dwell upon the particulars, after giving an account of his progresses through Galilee, as both the discourses and the events would no doubt be similar.

John VII. 2. This was the greatest and most joyful festival of the Jews, being celebrated after harvest, which in all countries is the natural season for festivity; the fruits of

of the year being then ſafely gathered in, and there being no proſpect of want in the approaching winter. But with the Jews it was more particularly in commemoration of their anceſtors having lived in tents in the wilderneſs forty years after they left Egypt. It was therefore a memorial of their having been fed with manna from heaven, and of all the miraculous events of that wonderful period.

It is ſomething remarkable with reſpect to this particular feſtival, that after the final return of the Iſraelites to their own country, where they are to be the moſt diſtinguiſhed people upon earth, and Jeruſalem is to be the great ſeat of worſhip and the reſort of nations, deputies from all parts of the world are to join in the celebration of it, by which means a regular intercourſe of a moſt friendly kind will be kept up among all the people of the world. See Zach. xiv. 16. &c.

3. Theſe *brethren of Jeſus* might either be his proper *brothers* by Joſeph and Mary, or ſome near relations, ſuch as we ſhould call couſins, for to theſe the appellation *brothers* is often given in the Hebrew idiom, as the term *Father* was given to any elderly relation.

5. Theſe brethren of Jeſus, it is evident, did not deny the truth of his miracles, but they did not admit him to be the Meſſiah. Indeed it muſt have been peculiarly difficult for them to admit this, with reſpect to a perſon, with whom they had been brought up from their infancy, who had worked with him at the ſame laborous occupation, and who, till the age of thirty, had not been conſidered as ſuperior to themſelves. There does

not however appear to have been any thing hoſtile or unfriendly to Jeſus in their behaviour towards him, either on this, or any former occaſion. For we have ſeen that at one time when he was much fatigued with travelling and preaching, they ſhewed great anxiety for him as kind relations naturally would, and we find that they were afterwards among the number of the diſciples of Jeſus, and they probably became ſo ſometime before his death. For when the firſt diſciples were aſſembled after the aſcenſion of Jeſus, and before the day of Pentecoſt, it is ſaid (Acts i, 14) *these all continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jeſus, and with his brethren.* The *ſame phraſe* is uſed in both places, and is therefore probably to be underſtood of the *ſame perſons.* The incredulity therefore, or rather the heſitation of the brethren of Jeſus to admit his being the Meſſiah, only ſhews that they were not diſpoſed to admit it without very ſtrong evidence; and it is a circumſtance greatly in favour of the evidence. (It required the greateſt addreſs in Mahomet to perſuade his own family to believe his divine miſſion, and was not accompliſhed in ſeveral years, tho' they were to be the greateſt gainers by his advancement) It muſt be obſerved likewiſe, that one of Jeſus's brethren, viz. James, was among the twelve apoſtles, from the beginning. For he is always called *the Lord's brother.* It was this James who reſided at Jeruſalem, and who had the moſt influence among the chriſtians there.

10. At this feaſt Jeſus thought proper to ſpend no more time at Jeruſalem than was neceſſary, and there-

fore

fore did not chuſe to go up along with his brethren, as otherwiſe he naturally would have done, but went afterwards, and with few attendants.

By Jeſus ſaying to his brethren *the world cannot hate you*, we are not to ſuppoſe that they are men who ſo conformed to the world as to be addicted to the vices of it, and by that means to have the favour of the world, but only that they had not rendered themſelves peculiarly obnoxious to the reſentment of the Jewiſh rulers, as he had done, by his free cenſure of them.

Luke xiii. 31. It is not probable that Herod had any ſerious deſign of apprehending Jeſus and much leſs of putting him to death. It is evident that he had ſuffered by the remorſe of his conſcience for the murder of John the Baptiſt, in which however he had not been a willing actor. But he might not be pleaſed to ſee Jeſus attended by ſuch crowds of people, as generally followed him in his territories, and therefore might give out that he would apprehend him, as he had done John the Baptiſt, without really intending it, but thinking by ſuch a threat to make him leave that part of the country; and on this account Jeſus might call him a *Fox*, or a cunning and artful man, (which however was not his general character, tho' he was profligate and diſſolute.

32. The word which we render *perfected* alſo ſignifies to be *conſecrated* or *made ready* as a victim for the altar. It appears from this circumſtance, that Jeſus generally performed his journeys on foot, and the diſtance of the central parts of Galilee from Jeruſalem being

ing

ing about fixty miles, it would be a journey of three days for a man, walking at his leiſure.

It was not litterally true that no prophet had ever periſhed out of Jeruſalem; but the great council of the nation being there, if they were ſentenced to death in a judicial form, it muſt have been in that place.

I ſhall be perfected.] Perhaps he means I ſhall have finiſhed all that is appointed me here. T.

33 The Ellipſis ſeems beſt ſupplied from his own words in the preceding verſe, thus: *Nevertheless I muſt* caſt out devils, and do cures *to-day and to-morrow*, and the day following, for it cannot, &c. T.

34. We ſee here the tender and affectionate temper of Jeſus, which indeed always ſhewed itſelf whenever he reflected on the calamities that was to befall his countrymen, tho' they were his enemies and murderers.

35. In this Jeſus probably refered to his ſecond and glorious coming, when the Jews and all the world would hail him as the Meſſiah or King. After this time he viſited Jeruſalem twice before his death, viz. at the approaching feaſt of tabernacles, and at the paſſover following.

Matt. XIX. 1. Luke IX. 51. As neither Matthew nor Luke give any account of Jeſus going to this feaſt of Tabernacles, it is probable that what they ſay here *of his leaving Galilee to go into Judea*, means his leaving that part of the country in general, to go and reſide in the more ſouthern provinces, and it is poſſible that he might return to Galilee after this feaſt, and withdraw from

from it *finally* ſome time afterwards; and then he might not go to Judea immediately, but to the country beyond Jordan. Luke ſaying, *that he ſet his face ſtedfaſtly to go to Jeruſalem*, implies that it required great courage and erection of mind to do it, which might be ſaid with truth of his going to ſuffer there, but not of his going to attend a feſtival.

56. This is a very inſtructive part of the hiſtory of Jeſus, and ſhews in the cleareſt light both his own natural meekneſs, and what ſhould be the temper of all his followers. The zeal of his diſciples on this occaſion was natural, and they thought the behaviour of theſe Samaritans and the example of Elijah would juſtify ſuch an aſtoniſhing miracle as they propoſed. But Jeſus had more enlarged views. He pitied the weakneſs of men, and did not wiſh to hurt even his enemies. Beſides theſe were not the perſonal enemies of Jeſus, being only actuated by the ſpirit of oppoſition which reſpected the whole nation of the Jews.

SECTION XLVIII.

The Cure of the ten Lepers, the Miſſion of the Seventy, and their Inſtructions.

Luke XVII. 11——19 X. 1——12.

WE are ſtill conſidering what paſſed between our Saviour finally taking leave of Galilee, and his going to reſide in Judea, either immediately before the

the feaſt of tabernacles, or preſently after it. Wherever he went opportunities occured of giving uſeful inſtructions and performing benevolent actions, and no opportunity of this kind was neglected by him.

11. Or between Galilee and Samaria, on the confines of both.

12. The leproſy being an infectious diſeaſe, thoſe who were afflicted with it were not permitted to come near other perſons, but lived together in ſeparate places. Theſe perſons therefore *ſtood afar off* as became their condition, and called aloud to Jeſus as he was paſſing. It is ſomething remarkable that theſe unhappy perſons could aſſociate together, tho' one of them was a Samaritan, and the reſt Jews; and in general they had the moſt rooted averſion to each other.

14. When the leprous perſon, who met Jeſus on his deſcent from the mount, preſented himſelf to him, it is ſaid, Matt. viii, 3. *he put forth his hand and touched him, ſaying I will, be thou clean.* This might be intended to ſhew that he was under no apprehenſion of catching the diſorder himſelf. In this caſe he adopts his uſual manner of ſpeaking to the diſeaſed perſons, without touching them.

According to the Jewiſh law the prieſts were the judges of the ſigns of leproſy, and authorized to pronounce whether it was ſafe for them to live in ſociety or not. Jeſus, in ſending theſe perſons to the prieſt, ſhewed his attention to the law, and likewiſe provided a proper evidence of the cure. When theſe lepers left Jeſus, it is evident that they had the diſeaſe upon them, but by this time the many cures he had performed,

ſome

ſome in one way and ſome in another had produced in the people a general conviction of his power, and a diſpoſition to comply with any injunctions that he ſhould lay upon them. This healing at a diſtance would tend to ſhew that the cure was not performed by any medical application; and there is this uſe in that variety of manner, in which Jeſus performed his cures, that by this means every poſſible objection was obviated.

By the order given to this Samaritan, as well as to the Jews, to go and ſhew himſelf to *the prieſt*, meaning no doubt at the temple of Jeruſalem, Jeſus might deſignedly intimate to this Samaritan, that the proper ſeat of worſhip was at Jeruſalem, and not mount Gerizim.

18. Jeſus being free from all the low prejudices of his countrymen (which by the way is a circumſtance that unbelievers cannot eaſily account for, ſince his education was no doubt the ſame with that of other Jews) takes every opportunity of leſſening the force of them in others. Thus, in a very early part of his miniſtry, to the great ſurprize of his diſciples, he converſed familiarly with a woman of that country at a well, and ſpent two days in the town where ſhe lived. He choſe, in one of his parables, to repreſent the perfection of humanity in the character of a Samaritan, and inhumanity in that of a Jewiſh prieſt and Levite. At this time he makes no diſtinction in his miracles, but ſhewed his good will to both nations alike. He likewiſe particularly pointed out the difference between this Samaritan and the nine Jews, to the advantage of the former, who diſcovered

diſcovered a ſtrong ſenſe of the favour he had receiv-ed, which the others did not; and he commended the Samaritan for his *faith*, as he had done a Roman centurion in a ſimilar caſe, as having ſhewn a better diſpoſition than the Jews.

Luke X 1. During our Lord's reſidence in Galilee, he had ſent out the twelve apoſtles, to viſit thoſe places where he himſelf could not conveniently go. The *number* Twelve, had probably ſome reference to the twelve tribes of Iſrael. In travelling through Judea he now ſelects *seventy* perſons, perhaps in alluſion to the *seventy elders*, of which the ſupreme court of judicature among the Jews conſiſted. They ſeem to have been ſent out with the ſame view, and to have had the ſame power with the twelve.

2. As ſeveral things mentioned in this charge which Jeſus gave to the Seventy, relate to things which could not happen in Judea, or indeed any where before his own death, it is not improbable that, tho' little be ſaid of theſe ſeventy diſciples, they were thoſe who were afterwards called *Evangelists*, whoſe buſineſs it was to preach the goſpel, and that their inſtructions reſpected their future miſſion more than this. Luke, Mark, and Barnabas, are all ſaid, by ſeveral of the antients, to have been of theſe Seventy; and having attended upon Jeſus almoſt as much as the twelve, they were nearly as well qualified both for this work, and for writing the hiſtory of his life, as the apoſtles themſelves.

4. This could hardly mean that they were not to give or return the common ſalutation, which would not detain

tain them in travelling, but that they were not to ſtop and converſe with thoſe that they met. Niebbuhr ſays it is cuſtomary in Arabia, after the common ſalutation, to ſtop travellers, and aſk them many impertinent queſtions, the anſwering of which would have detained them a conſiderable time.

12 As there is nothing materially different in the inſtructions given to the Seventy, and thoſe to the Twelve, I ſhall in this place give a ſummary view of the purport of them under diſtinct heads.

1. This commiſſion was the very ſame with that of John the Baptiſt, and Jeſus himſelf, not to declare that he was the Meſſiah, but only that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, and to work miracles as he himſelf did, even raiſing the dead.

2. They were to communicate to others whatever they had learned of him, without making any reſerve.

3. They were to depend entirely on the providence of God for their ſupport, and not to ſeek various entertainments by going from houſe to houſe.

4. In full confidence of their divine miſſion they were to pronounce the bleſſing of peace on thoſe who received them and to leave a ſolemn teſtimony againſt thoſe who rejected them.

5. They were to behave with the greateſt innocence and integrity, but at the ſame time with prudence.

6. They were not to fear man, but confide in the ſpecial providence of God, whenever they ſhould be brought into any circumſtance of peculiar danger.

7 They

7. They were not to be discouraged either at their own perfecution, since he himself was to suffer as much as they could do, or at those dissentions which the promulgation of christianity would necessarily occasion in the world.

8. When they were persecuted in any one place, they were directed to flee to another, so that they were not ostentatiously to brave danger.

9. They were assured that whatever any of them might lose by their adherence to him, abundant recompence would be made to them, for it. If they should lose their lives in his cause, they would receive a nobler life hereafter, such as it was not in the power of man to take from them.

10. Lastly, all those who should befriend them would be considered as having shewn friendship to their master, and be rewarded by him for it hereafter.

SECTION XLIX.

Jesus discourses with the Jews concerning his mission, at the Feast of Tabernacles.

John VII. 11——53.

JESUS is now at Jerusalem, at the feast of tabernacles, and here John has recorded several of his very interesting discourses with the Jews, such as were omitted by the other evangelists. They chiefly relate

late to the evidence of his miſſion, as if John, writing the laſt of the evangeliſts, and near to, if not after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, wiſhed to ſhew that the Jews had reſiſted not only the evidence of miracles ſeen by themſelves, in favour of the divine miſſion of Jeſus, but alſo his own juſt reaſonings on the ſubject, ſo that they were wholly without excuſe. They indulged a diſpoſition of mind, on which no evidence could make any impreſſion, and being incurably blinded by their vices and obſtinacy, were ripe for deſtruction.

There is great obſcurity in all the diſcourſes of Jeſus related by John, being probably very imperfectly recollected, and likewiſe recited without thoſe circumſtances which attended the delivery, and which would have contributed to make them intelligible.

13 We cannot wonder that by this time Jeſus and his miracles were become intereſting objects of attention, and ſubjects of diſcourſe to all the Jewiſh nation. All perſons muſt have heard of him, and have formed ſome opinion or other about him. The common people in general thought highly of him, not doubting his divine miſſion, any more than they had done that of John the Baptiſt, and they hoped that he might be their promiſed Meſſiah. But the heads of the nation, on account of his paying no court to them, and always appearing hoſtile to them (ſo that whatever he was, they were ſenſible they had nothing to hope from him) were not his friends. They were very unwilling to think that he was a prophet, and were very far from ſuppoſing him to be the Meſſiah. They were perpetually cavilling at his miracles, and his conduct, ſaying that he

could not come from God, becauſe he broke the laws of Moſes, in performing his cures on the ſabbath day; and as to the moſt diſtinguiſhed of his miracles, viz. curing demoniacs, and probably the reſt of his miracles alſo, they aſcribed them to the aſſiſtance of Satan. However, knowing that the bulk of the people thought well of him, they did not chuſe to ſpeak openly what they thought of him, any more than they did with reſpect to John the baptiſt.

15. Among the Jews, no perſon undertook to teach others, who had not had a regular education under their Scribes, or profeſſed teachers of the law; whereas Jeſus employed himſelf wholly in teaching, and in the moſt public place of reſort, the temple where the Jewiſh doctors alſo taught, without having any advantage of that kind.

16. This reply was modeſt and proper, and at the ſame time led to the ſubject of his divine miſſion, with which he wiſhed to impreſs them. Tho' he had not had his inſtruction from the Scribes, he was not therefore *untaught*, but had been *taught of God* himſelf, and was therefore well qualified to teach others. This however I would obſerve is not the language of one, who was conſcious that he himſelf was God, and therefore could not ſtand in any need of teaching.

17. Here Jeſus very properly hints at the true reaſon of the unbelief of the Scribes and Phariſees in his miſſion. They had not an ingenuous candid mind, open to conviction, or a real deſire to know and do the will of God. And we ſee every day that the ſame evidence makes a very different impreſſion upon perſons, accord-

according to their previous diſpoſition with reſpect to the object of it.

18. Here Jeſus gives another proof of his not being an impoſtor. He claimed nothing to himſelf, and did not ſeek to advance his own glory or worldly intereſt; for impoſtors always ſeek ſomething for themſelves. Jeſus had indeed, in one ſenſe, his own glory in view, as was evident from his praying for it, and from its being ſaid that *for the hope that was set before him he endured the cross*, but then it was *in a future state*, not *in this*, to which alone impoſtors look.

19. This, which he knew to be their ſecret intention, could not be agreable to the law of Moſes.

20. This muſt have been ſaid by ſome of the common people, who ſuſpected nothing of the ſecret deſigns of their rulers. They even thought it folly in the extreme to imagine ſuch a thing.

22. Δια τουτο ſhould have been joined to θαυμαζετε in the cloſe of the preceding verſe—*Ye all marvel at it.* T.

23. *That the law of Moses should not be broken,*] Or the ſenſe may be, as in the margin of our tranſlation, *without breaking the law of Moses.*

Jeſus here ſhews them that the law of Moſes, for which they profeſſed ſo great an attachment, allowed more manual labour than he had ever employed on that day. For if the eighth day from the birth of a child ſhould be a ſabbath, it muſt be circumciſed on that day; whereas he had not worked at all, but had only pronounced a man to be cured on that day; and being aid-

ed by the power of God in the performance of this cure, it certainly carried its own juſtification along with it.

27. This muſt have been ſaid by ſome who had been informed of the intention of the rulers; tho' perhaps what Jeſus himſelf had ſaid before, being divulged, might be all the information that theſe people had. They expreſſed their ſurprize that the rulers having formed the deſign of putting Jeſus to death, ſhould not apprehend him, but ſuffer him to ſpeak openly as he did, and might think that they themſelves might begin to ſuſpect that he was the Meſſiah. This, however, they thought could not well be; becauſe it was generally imagined, that tho' the Meſſiah was to be born at Bethlehem, he would not be known to be the Meſſiah till Elijah ſhould come and anoint him. Till that time they might ſuppoſe that he would be concealed, nobody could tell where, and thence come and make his appearance as a king, *in the clouds of heaven*, as deſcribed by Daniel.

29. This ſhould have been read by way of interrogation, "Do you indeed know me, and whence I am? "then you muſt know that I am come from God; but "with him, and the meaſures of his conduct, you are "not acquainted, as I am."

31. It appears from this that the Jews expected that the Meſſiah would work miracles; and at this day, the common opinion among them is, that he is to act the part of Moſes, and to deliver them from their preſent diſperſion, and, as it were, bondage, in all nations in the world, as Moſes did from their bondage in Egypt;

and

and as miracles were neceſſary to effect the one, ſo they will probably be neceſſary to effect the other.

Jeſus had now been preaching publicly, and working miracles, from the Paſſover to the feaſt of Tabernacles, which he is now attending, the former in our March, the latter in September; in all which time he could conveniently appear abroad, and be attended by others with the moſt convenience. For we generally find him teaching in the open air. By this time the rulers of the Jews had formed their opinions, and taken their meaſures, with reſpect to him. They had been informed of all that he had taught, and they had ſeen and heard all that he did; and finding that whether he was a true prophet or not, he was not a man to their purpoſe (an idea which of itſelf would ſtrongly prejudice them againſt his pretenſions to a divine miſſion, and lead them to account for his conduct and miracles in any other manner, rather than on that principle) they had determined to put him to death. They had indeed formed the deſign ſo early as the Pentecoſt, but they were undetermined how to put it in execution; and they were the more irreſolute on account of Jeſus being ſo well received by the common people, ſo that their deſign was only ſuſpected by ſome. We have now the firſt account of any open attempt to apprehend him.

32. The Phariſees finding that the people in general entertained the idea of Jeſus being their promiſed Meſſiah, eſpecially on account of the miracles which he wrought, and probably ſeeing that their deſign was now

ſuſpected, thought that their authority would be loſt, if they did not proceed to carry it into execution; and therefore now for the firſt time, they ſend proper officers to apprend Jeſus, and to bring him before them. It appears however that theſe officers did not attempt to execute their orders immediately, and yet finding a great concourſe of people about Jeſus, liſtening attentively to him, in ſo public a place as the temple, they joined the audiencce; intending no doubt to take that opportunity of apprehending him, when they ſhould ſee that they could do it to the moſt advantage. In the mean time Jeſus proceeds with his diſcourſe, which was not one continued ſpeech, but rather a converſation ariſing from particular incidents; and knowing who were preſent, he had, no doubt, a view to them in what he took occaſion to ſay from this time.

34. *Ye ſhall ſeek me and ſhall not find me*, &c.] Alluding to the period after his reſurrection, meaning that they would be inquiring after, and wiſhing for, the Meſſiah.

In this Jeſus alludes, no doubt, to thoſe who were ſent to apprehend him; and what he ſaid could not well have been underſtood by any others. It might be their perceiving this, and knowing that he had no natural means of being acquainted with it, that might contribute to overawe them, and prevent them from executing the purpoſe on which they had been ſent.

35 *And teach them.*] Pearce conſiders the word *Greeks* as an interpolation, thinking that the Jews would hardly ſuſpect our Lord of teaching any other people than the

the Jews diſperſed among the Gentiles, not the Gentiles themſelves.

Jeſus here ſays that his ſtay with them would not be long, that when his time ſhould be expired, but not before, he ſhould return to him that ſent him, meaning God, and that then it would not be in their power to apprehend him at all. He hereby intimated that he was not then to be apprehended by any perſon, but was to continue preaching ſome time longer.

36. As none but thoſe who were ſent to apprehend Jeſus, could well know what he meant, the reſt of the audience muſt have been at a loſs to know what he alluded to; and they thought that he could no otherwiſe go whither they could not come to him, but by going among the Gentiles and preaching to them. For that if he went among the Jews wherever they were diſperſed, they would know where he was, and could have acceſs to them. The Jews of that age took infinite pains to make proſelytes, and therefore they imagined that Jeſus would go on a miſſion for that purpoſe. It appears however that he did not chuſe to explain himſelf any farther, having ſaid what he thought ſufficient with reſpect to thoſe who were ſent to apprehend him.

37. On the laſt day of the feaſt of tabernacles, which was a day of great joy and feſtivity among the Jews, it was the cuſtom to fetch water from the brook of Siloam, ſome of which they drank with loud acclamations of joy and thankſgiving, and ſome they brought to the altar, in commemoration of their foreſathers being miraculouſly relieved when they thirſted in the wilder-

neſs; and ſome they brought as a drink offering to God, to pray for rain againſt the following ſeed time. *Benſon's Life of Chriſt*, p. 412.

37. 38. Some obſcurity ſeems to ariſe from an injudicious punctuation and diviſion of theſe verſes. I would read the text thus—*If any man thirſt, let him come unto me; and let him that believeth on me drink, as the ſcripture hath ſaid;* (referring to Iſaiah LV, 1.) out of his belly ſhall flow rivers *of living water*. Theſe laſt words are not a quotation, for we do not find them any where in the Old Teſtament, but our Lord's own promiſe, as the evangeliſt intimates in the following words. Perhaps καί may have been loſt from before ποταμοί. T.

39. This is the interpretation which the evangeliſt puts upon the words of Jeſus. But it is poſſible that on this occaſion, Jeſus might intend to intimate the ſame that he did when, in his converſation with the woman of Samaria, he ſaid that *the water which he ſhould give would be a well of water, ſpringing up unto eternal life*; meaning that it would make them immortal, giving them a place in heaven, where they will be happy for ever. The ſame alſo was his meaning when in his diſcourſe in the ſynagogue at Capernaum, he ſaid, *that if any man eat of the bread that he ſhould give him, he would live for ever*. According to the evangeliſt Jeſus refered to the benefit that would ariſe to *others* from the preaching of his diſciples, and not to themſelves.

40. There does not appear to be any ſufficient ground for this concluſion from any thing that Jeſus then ſaid.

For

For tho' what he delivered may be called a *prophecy*, it was not then fulfilled. They muſt therefore have been ſtruck with his authoritative manner of ſpeaking, or with the general ſtrain of his doctrine, and the tenor of his conduct, and have drawn this concluſion of his being a prophet from the whole. By *the prophet* they might mean Elias, who was to precede the Meſſiah.

43. This diviſion of the people ſeems only to refer to ſome of them thinking that he was ſimply a prophet, (or perhaps that prophet, who was to announce the Meſſiah) and others that he was the Meſſiah himſelf. If there was any other difference of opinion among the common people, it is not here mentioned.

44 That is ſome of thoſe who were ſent by the Phariſees for that purpoſe, but they being probably many of them (for the rulers could not think to effect their purpoſe by a few perſons, when Jeſus was attended by ſuch crowds of his friends in ſo public a place as the temple) the majority would not join with them in it.

46. We may eaſily judge what muſt have been the diſappointment of the chief rulers of the nation, aſſembled in council, to find that they were not able to get their orders obeyed. All authority we ſee depends on the concurrence of others, or the diſpoſition and will of many to ſecond the wiſhes of a few. In other words, all power depends upon *opinion*, and without the general opinion in their favour, magiſtrates are no more than ſingle men. As theſe officers do not explain themſelves, we may ſuppoſe that they were overawed by what Jeſus had ſaid, which implied that he well knew their errand

errand, and that they could not ſucceed in it; as they had been ſtruck by the manner in which he had delivered himſelf, ſo much in the character of a prophet.

49. This ſhews the extreme chagrin and pride of the members of this court. They had no reſource but in their officers, and tho' they had not obeyed them they ſeem to have had no means of puniſhing them for their diſobedience. The learned Phariſees held the common people, who had not ſtudied the law as they had done, in great contempt, and thought it preſumption in them to have an opinion which was not authorized by their eſtabliſhed teachers.

51. Nicodemus, being one of the court, had a right to give his opinion, which in this caſe was ſenſible and proper. They ought not to have decided on the pretenſions of Jeſus, and much leſs have determined to put him to death, without having heard or examined him.

52. Since ſeveral prophets had actually riſen out of Galilee (as, particularly it is thought, Elijah, Eliſha, Jonah, Amos, Nahum, and Hoſea) Pearce thinks that the great prophet whom they expected to precede the Meſſiah was meant.

In this caſe they obſerve that there was no occaſion to hear and examine Jeſus, ſince the place from which he ſprung was ſufficient to diſprove his pretenſions; ſo weakly do great bodies of men ſometimes argue when their intereſt lays a biaſs on their minds. Let us all be on our guard againſt this, and every other ſource of falſe judgement.

53 They

53. They appear to have been entirely at a loſs what to do, and being diſappointed in this attempt, they did not at this time come to any reſolution about another.

PARAPHRASE.

John VII. 15. The Jews marvelled, ſaying, how came this man to be ſo learned in the law of God, when he has not been educated under any of the doctors who profeſs that knowledge? 16. Jeſus anſwered, my doctrine is neither any thing that I have learned of your doctors, nor what I have acquired myſelf; but what I have received from God; 17. As any perſon who does the will of God, and has a mind free from vicious prejudice, may eaſily perceive: 18. That I am no impoſtor, you might preſume from my not acting in my own name, but referring every thing to God who ſent me, without having any ſecular views whatever. 19. But, as I obſerved, they are only thoſe who, without prejudice, ſeek to know and labour to do the will of God that can expect to judge rightly concerning me; and this is not your caſe: for though Moſes gave you the law, which you acknowledge came from God, many of you live in wilful violation of it; and even at this very time, I know that, in direct violation of that law, ſome of you have formed a deſign of putting me to death. 20. The populace, who knew nothing of that deſign, ſaid unto him, thou muſt certainly be poſſeſſed with a dæmon, to entertain ſuch a ſuſpicion. Doſt thou not go where thou pleaſeſt, and preach what thou pleaſeſt, unmoleſted? Who goes about to kill thee?

21, 22. Jeſus

21, 22. Jeſus, without thinking proper to make any reply to thoſe perſons, who were not in the ſecret of their rulers; but, knowing that the true motive of thoſe who had their deſign againſt him was his having healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, addreſſed them on that ſubject, ſaying, The thing at which you are ſo much offended ought not to ſurprize you, becauſe it is of a piece with what you do yourſelves, who make no ſcruple of performing the action of circumciſion on the ſabbath day. 23. And there is this difference between the two actions in favour of mine, that whereas you wound, I heal, and not one member of the human body only, but the whole man. 24. For the future, therefore, judge more equitably and impartially concerning my conduct.

25. Some of the people of Jeruſalem, who knew of the deſign of their rulers, ſaid, Is not this the man whom they are ſeeking to kill. 26. And yet he preacheth openly without moleſtation? Can it be that they have laid aſide their intention, and are now convinced that he is indeed the Meſſiah? 27. It is, however, impoſſible that it ſhould be the Meſſiah, becauſe he is of Nazareth, in Galilee, which we are ſure is not the birth place of the Meſſiah. We are, moreover apprized that there will be ſomething very extraordinary, or miraculous, attending his birth whereas this Jeſus is nothing more than the ſon of Joſeph and Mary. 28. Jeſus, knowing that the perſons who reaſoned in this manner were within the reach of his voice, cried out, Do you indeed know me, and whence I am? If you do, you well know that I have a commiſſion from God, who would

would not impoſe upon you by ſuch credentials of a divine miſſion as he has ſent with me. But you are indeed very far from having that knowledge of God and of his deſigns, that you imagine you have, and which I really have, having ſprung immediately from him, and having been expreſsly ſent by him. 30. Then the people, who were commiſſioned by the magiſtrates to ſeize him, fought for an opportunity of executing their commiſſion, but their wicked deſign was over-ruled for the preſent by the providence of God, it being more ſuitable to the deſigns of his infinite wiſdom, that Jeſus ſhould be put to death in a more public manner at the enſuing paſſover.

SECTION L.

Of the woman taken in adultery. Jeſus diſcourſes concerning his being the light of the world.

John VIII. 1——30.

DURING our Lord's attendance on the public feſtivals at Jeruſalem, it ſeems to have been his cuſtom not to ſleep in the city, but in ſome place in the neighbourhood of it. It was evidently ſo at the laſt paſſover, when it is ſaid that he ſlept at Bethany; and it is very probable that he did ſo at this time, as this was a village at the foot of, or on the mount of Olives, which was only ſeparated from the city by a narrow valley; and in this village lived Lazarus and his two ſiſters, for whom Jeſus had a particular friendſhip.

ſhip. The temple being the place of the greateſt reſort, Jeſus no ſooner returned from the place where he had paſſed the night, than we find him there.

5. It has been obſerved that according to the law of Moſes, the puniſhment of *ſtoning* is only enjoined in the caſe of a woman *betrothed to a man*, and not actually married. If ſhe was married, it is ſaid indeed that ſhe ſhould be *put to death*, but as nothing is ſaid of the manner of doing it, the Jews interpreted it of *ſtrangling*.

Wrote on the ground.] The words, *As though he heard them not*, which follow in our tranſlation, are not in our preſent Greek text, and are ſuperfluous.

6. It is evident from this that the Jewiſh rulers having failed in their former attempt to put Jeſus to death, by apprehending him, and themſelves paſſing ſentence of death upon him, now thought to gain their point by accuſing him to the Roman governor, as one who had not only aſſumed the character of a king, but who had actually interfered in the adminiſtration of juſtice. For they ſeem to have taken it for granted that he would confirm their deciſion, that the woman ought to be ſtoned; and they were no doubt, ready to produce evidence, that he had given orders for the execution as a judge, and not merely as a man giving his opinion what a proper judge ought to do in the caſe. He therefore very wiſely avoided giving them any handle againſt him; and in the firſt place did not appear to take any notice of them:

7. This is one of the many occaſions on which Jeſus extricated himſelf from the ſnares of his enemies by his

his happy preſence of mind. He did not ſay that the woman might not be ſtoned, nor did he give orders, as from himſelf, that ſhe ſhould be ſtoned; but well knowing the characters of thoſe who had brought her, men, who were probably guilty of the very crime, of which they accuſed this woman (for in other places he ſays concerning perſons of this claſs, that they robbed *widow's houses, and for a pretence made long prayers*, and that they were *adulterers and a ſinful generation*) he ſpake to their conſciences, in ſuch a manner as evidently aſtoniſhed and overawed them. For without ſome particular conſciouſneſs of the truth of his inſinuation, they would hardly have left him the woman in the manner they did.

9. There is ſomething extraordinary in theſe perſons walking off according to their ages, which muſt have been particularly noticed by thoſe who were preſent, and have been remembered for its ſingularity. Perhaps the oldeſt, who went off firſt, was the moſt guilty. By Jeſus being *left alone with the woman in the midſt*, we are to underſtand that her accuſers were all gone, and the woman left ſtanding in the circle, which had no doubt been made for her and her accuſers, by the diſciples of Jeſus and the ſurrounding multitude, in the midſt of whom they now were.

11. This was a ſufficient reproof from Jeſus in the character of a teacher, and might have a greater effect than a ſtronger invective, and yet, on this account many chriſtians in former times, ſuſpected the truth of the ſtory, and omitted it in their copies of this goſpel. But this

this was only in a few of them, so that there cannot be any reasonable doubt of its authenticity. According to the severe rules of church discipline in primitive times, an adulterer, or adultress, was not till after many years, if at all, received into communion.

12. You well remember that on the preceding day there had been a dispute among the Jews, who Jesus was, whether he might not be the prophet who was to precede the Messiah, or the Messiah himself. To this, and to the custom, as it is thought of celebrating this feast of tabernacles with *lights*, Jesus now alludes, telling them in figurative terms, *who* and *what* he was, viz. the *light of the world*, a person sent to impart to mankind the most important and salutary truth.

John VIII. 14. This Mr. W. renders, *Tho' I do bear testimony to myself, this testimony is true*, viz. that I know whence I came, and whether I am going, This he could not but know of himself.

18. There is much obscurity in what Jesus here says of the witnesses to his divine mission. The first observes that his own testimony ought to be received, because it related to another of which he alone had perfect knowledge, viz. the commission that he had received from God, and the issue of it in his resurrection and ascension. This is implied in his saying, *I know whence I came, and whether I go*, it is therefore a kind of appeal to his future resurrection, and to God bearing witness to him by the miracles which he wrought. But still they were not two distinct witnesses which the law of Moses required, viz. two besides the person himself, unless we suppose him to have personified the power of

of working miracles, as he afterwards did, by the name of *the holy spirit*, as ſomething diſtinct from the Father himſelf. But this is not treated of here.

19. Jeſus could not mean that the Jews had no knowledge of the true God, but they did not know the relation in which he ſtood to God.

21. They would in vain look for the Meſſiah in their troubles, which however would come, and terminate in the deſtruction of their nation, for their unbelief, and their rejection of him; but before that time he would be out of their reach.

The proſperous ſtate of the Jewiſh nation had always depended upon their obedience to God and his prophets. This flagrant act of diſobedience and unbelief would therefore be puniſhed as ſimilar inſtances of diſobedience and obſtinacy had been puniſhed before, that is by great national calamities.

25. That is, I am what I told you before, viz. the light of the world. He did not chuſe to explain himſelf farther, but left his hearers to judge of his works, what his proper character was.

28. After the death of Jeſus there would be ſuch an evidence of his divine miſſion and Meſſiahſhip, from his reſurrection, aſcension, and the pouring out of his ſpirit upon his diſciples, as would convince great numbers, and convert them to chriſtiauity.

30. Notwithſtanding his not aſſuming the character of a king, the hearers of Jeſus might be ſo much impreſſed with the excellence of his character, the dignity and energy of his diſcourſes, and the proof that he gave of his divine miſſion, that they might be in the

ſame ſtate of mind with reſpect to him, that the apoſtles and his other profeſſed diſciples were; i. e. ſatisfied that he was no impoſtor, and inclined to believe, notwithſtanding ſome appearances to the contrary, that he was the perſon who would ſome time or other *redeem* Iſrael, and aſſume the character of their Meſſiah. For much farther than this, the apoſtles themſelves did not go before the deſcent of the holy ſpirit on the day of Pentecoſt.

PARAPHRASE.

John VIII. 14. It is true that I bear teſtimony to myſelf, but what I aſſert is true, becauſe it relates to a thing in which I cannot be deceived, knowing very well that I have received a commiſſion from God, and that I ſhall return to him. 15. But this is what you are not acquainted with, and while you retain your carnal prejudices in favour of a temporal prince for your Meſſiah, you cannot form a right judgment concerning me. 16. For this you are juſtly to be condemned; and tho', for the preſent, I paſs no ſentence of condemnation upon you, yet if I ſhould do it, it would be juſt, and would be confirmed by the ſuffrage of my Father, who is with me, and acts by me. 17. Now, according to your own maxims, the teſtimony of two perſons is to be received. 18. And in this caſe you have not only my own evidence that I have received a commiſſion from God, but the teſtimony of God himſelf, in thoſe miraculous works which he has empowered me to do in confirmation of it. 19. They ſay unto him, Where-

Where is thy Father? Jeſus, not willing to ſpeak more plainly to perſons ſo exceedingly prejudiced, only replied, He is a perſon of whom ye know as little as you do of me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father alſo. Had you attended to my works, you would have known that they have been performed by the finger of God himſelf, and therefore that I am the Meſſiah which he has promiſed you.

20. This diſcourſe Jeſus held in the treaſury; and tho' he was ſo ſevere and bold, no man apprehended him, divine providence reſerving him for another time. 21. Jeſus, however, referring to his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion into heaven, at a future time, ſaid, I go away, and ye ſhall enquire after the Meſſiah (who I truly am) in your troubles, but in vain, for you ſhall periſh by the righteous judgment of God for your manifold wickedneſs, and eſpecially for your ſin in murdering me, when I ſhall be out of your reach in a place where you cannot come. 22. The Jews ſaid, What can he mean? Does he intend to withdraw himſelf from us by a voluntary death. 23. Jeſus ſaid, the true cauſe of your blindneſs of heart, and of the juſt condemnation of which I have been ſpeaking, is to be ſought for in your character and views. You are wholly worldly minded, and cannot reliſh any Saviour or Meſſiah, but one who ſhall appear in great temporal power and ſplendor; whereas my kingdom is not of this world. I have no views of this nature, and you have no other views. 24. I foreſee, therefore, that the bulk of your nation is doomed to that deſtruction which will be the

unavoidable conſequence of your not receiving me in my real character.

25. They ſay unto him, what then is thy proper character, and who art thou? Jeſus replies, the ſame that I told you before, and at the beginning of this diſcourſe, viz. the great light of the world, or the Meſſiah. 26. And I have many more things to ſay to you, and to judge concerning you. At preſent, however, I confine myſelf to the publication of what I have received from God, whoſe truth and veracity may be depended upon.

27. Notwithſtanding in this our Lord alluded ſo plainly to his being ſent of God, they did not fully underſtand him. 28. Then ſaid Jeſus, Tho' you are now ſo incredulous, and blinded by worldly prejudices, yet after my death and reſurrection, many of you will be convinced that I am the Meſſiah, and that whatever I have delivered to you, I have received in commiſſion from God. 29. It is his will to which I am wholly devoted, and he conſtantly ſpeaks and acts by me. 30. Our Lord having intimated his death by the expreſſion of being *lifted up*, alluding to his crucifixion, many of his hearers probably underſtood him of a temporal exaltation, and eagerly catching at it, concluded that he might indeed, be the Meſſiah.

SECTION LI.

Jeſus diſcourſes concerning Abraham's Seed.

John VIII. 31——59.

JESUS is now engaged in a very mixed converſation, ſometimes with the Scribes and Phariſees, and

and ſometimes with the people at large, occaſioned by his ſaying, in his figurative way of ſpeaking, that *he was the light of the world.* The Phariſees object to his divine miſſion, as deſtitute of proper evidence, and he defends it as ſupported not by his own teſtimony only, but by that of God, intimating withal, that they were not proper judges in the caſe, as not being in a ſtate of mind to judge impartially about it. With this diſcourſe many perſons were ſo impreſſed, that the evangeliſt ſays *they believed on him,* and to them it is that Jeſus now addreſſes himſelf.

This diſcourſe was held in that apartment of the temple, which was called *the Treasury.* This immenſe and magnificent building had many ſpacious rooms, courts, and porticos, all of which ſeem to have been open to thoſe who choſe to reſort to them; and they might either be in the open air, or under cover, as was moſt convenient. In ſome of theſe apartments it is probable that the Scribes, or profeſſed teachers of the law, regularly ſat, and taught the people who reſorted to them, in the ſame manner as the philoſophers in the ſchools of Greece.

31. This Jeſus probably ſaid from his knowledge of the ficklenefs of the common people; being apprized that the ſame perſons who were then attached to him, in expectation perhaps of his ſome time or other aſſuming what they thought to be the proper character of the Meſſiah, viz. the inſignia of regal power, and reſcuing them from their ſubjection to the Romans, would, when they found themſelves diſappointed in

their fonder expectations, be exaſperated againſt him, and become eagerly bent on his deſtruction.

The ſentiment that is here conveyed to us is of the greateſt importance. Mere faith in Chriſt, or belief of his divine miſſion, will not make us his diſciples, to any purpoſe. We muſt, as he ſays, *continue in his word*, we muſt perſevere both in faith and obedience, before we can be entitled to the proper rewards of chriſtianity.

32 Freedom was the favourite object of all the Jewiſh nation. This they particularly expected from their Meſſiah, and here Jeſus uſing the word in a figurative ſenſe, promiſes them freedom if they would continue in his word. For true freedom, or an emancipation from their ſubjection to ſin and death, would be the ſure conſequence of their becoming his diſciples.

The truth ſhall make you free.] It is ſaid to have been at the feaſt of tabernacles, or ſoon after, in the year of Jubilee, that all Jewiſh ſlaves were ſet free; and as our Lord alluded to it, this might poſſibly be that year. If ſo, it would be a pleaſing coincidence with the year in which chriſtianity was publiſhed.

33. *We were never in bondage to any man.*] Pearce ſuppoſes that theſe Jews could not mean their whole nation in a civil reſpect, it was ſo very evidently contrary to truth, but that they meant themſelves in particular, or the nation in a moral reſpect. If this was the year of Jubilee, it is probable they might mean themſelves who having been always free, had not had any occaſion

to

to avail themſelves of the indulgence granted that year.

41. Here the Jews ſeem to have underſtood Jeſus not as ſpeaking of their natural deſcent from Abraham, but as aſſerting that they did not ſtand in the ſame relation to God that Abraham did. They therefore aſſert that they were not that ſimple and adulterous generation, which he ſometimes ſaid they were, but obedient children of God, as their anceſtor Abraham had been.

42. If they had God for their father, and if they were the proper ſons of God, they would reſpect all thoſe who ſtood in the ſame relation to him; and eſpecially thoſe who evidently bore his commiſſion, and were his prophets.

43. i. e. "why do ye thus cavil at my words, and do "not ſeem to underſtand me! It is becauſe you have "not the right diſpoſition of mind to which you pre-"tend."

44. The term *Father* was uſed by the Jews with great latitude, and often in a metaphorical ſenſe, for *head* or *leader*. Thus Abraham is called the *Father of the faithful*, on account of the greatneſs of his faith. So alſo wicked men are called in the Old Teſtament *ſons of Belial*; and theſe wicked Jews who conſpired againſt the life of Jeſus, and would not liſten to his inſtructions, are here in the ſame figurative ſenſe of the word, ſaid to have learned their bad practices from the ſource of all evil, termed the *devil*, not a real perſon any more than *ſin* or death, which are alſo ſome times

perſonified in the ſcriptures, as I have frequently obſerved, and explained more at large.

44. By a ſight alteration of the text Mr. W. renders, *When any one ſpeaks a lie, he ſpeaks according to his own kindred. For his father alſo muſt have been a liar.* i. e. he by this means diſcovers that he is of the devil, and not of God. W.

46. By *ſin* in this place is meant not any violation of the law of God, but *impoſture*, Jeſus had aſſerted the truth of his divine miſſion, and tho' they did not admit this claim, they could not diſprove it.

48. To ſay that a man was a *Samaritan* was as reproachful as ſaying that he was a *demoniac* or *inſane*; and theſe Jews thought they could not ſay leſs of a man, who aſſerted his own divine miſſion, and reproached them for their unbelief in it, as he did.

51. I have obſerved that this diſcourſe of Jeſus is far from being a connected one. It was probably delivered with many interruptions, and might conſiſt of what he had taken occaſion to ſay at different times in the courſe of the day. Having offended his audience by ſaying that he was the *light of the world*, he now offends them ſtill more, by aſſuming more than any of the preceding prophets, promiſing his diſciples *everlaſting life*, or that they would not *die*, or loſe their lives, *forever*, as this phraſe might have been tranſlated, but that he would *raiſe them up at the laſt day*.

52. The Jews underſtood what Jeſus had ſaid literally, that his diſciples ſhould never die at all, and thence they take occaſion to ſay that he could be no

other

other than inſane. And he perceiving their prejudice does not condeſcend to ſet them right, by explaining himſelf farther.

56. It is not eaſy to ſay what this refers to. All that Abraham ſaw, or deſired to ſee, i. e, in viſion, and as future, was the proſperity of his deſcendants in ſome diſtant period. And if the converſion of the Jews to chriſtianity be any way connected with this future happy ſtate of the Jewiſh nation, it may be called *the day of the Meſſiah.*

57. Here again the Jews cavil at the literal meaning of Jeſus's expreſſions, as if he had lived before Abraham, but he no more intended this, than he intended to ſay that his diſciples could never die.

58. Jeſus perceiving the perverſeneſs of his audience, evidently did not mean to give them ſatisfaction, but, as on a former occaſion, continued his figurative way of ſpeaking, rather adding to the enigma of it, than explaining it. But he did not ſay either that he had ſeen Abraham, or that Abraham had ſeen *him*, but only *his day*. All that he meant was, that as the future glory and happineſs of the poſterity of Abraham, was connected with his kingdom, and that this had been intimated to Abraham, this kingdom of his muſt have been intended in the divine counſels before the time of Abraham. In like manner Jeſus ſpeaks of the *glory* that he had with God, *before the world was*, tho' he at the ſame time ſpeaks of that very glory as the reward of his ſufferings, and therefore not to be conferred till a future period. Chriſtians are alſo ſaid to be choſen in Chriſt

Chriſt, Eph. i, 4. *before the foundation of the world*, tho' it is certain they had no being at that time. But in the eye of God, whatever is to be, may be ſaid already to exiſt, with him a thouſand years are as one day, and one day as a thouſand years.

I am.] Chriſt had uſed theſe words twice before in this diſcourſe, in both which places our tranſlators have added the word *he*; why they have not done the ſame here, it is difficult to aſſign a good reaſon. 24.—*if ye believe not that* (ἐγω εἰμι) *I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* 28. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ſhall ye know that* (ἐγω εἰμι) *I am he.* In both theſe paſſages I preſume that we are to underſtand *he that was promiſed*; or, in the words of the Baptiſt, Matt. xi, 3. *he that ſhould come.* So here;—*before Abraham was, I am he that ſhould come*, or *I am he that was promiſed before Abraham was.* T.

59. *And ſo paſſed by.* Theſe words are not found in many MSS. and probably are not genuine. See Pearce.

PARAPHRASE.

John VIII. 31, Jeſus, addreſſing himſelf to thoſe who began to entertain thoughts of his being the Meſſiah, ſaid, If you hold faſt my doctrine, and regulate your lives by it you ſhall be my diſciples indeed. 32. And in due time ſhall be inſtructed in the whole extent of my divine commiſſion and be thereby raiſed to a ſtate of dignity and freedom, peculiar to thoſe whoſe minds

minds are ſo enlightened. 33. They, conſidering this as a reflection upon them, replied, We are the deſcendants of Abraham, and being the favourite people of God, are under no moral ſervitude whatever. 34, Jeſus anſwered, in that you have been ſinners, governed by your irregular appetites and paſſions, you may properly enough be ſaid to have been ſlaves to ſin. 35. Beſides, admitting that you are the ſervants of God, you cannot, as ſuch be ſure of a permanent eſtabliſhment in his family; but the ſon and heir has not only a permanent eſtabliſhment in the family, but alſo a conſiderable power in it. 36. If he therefore make you free, you ſhall be no longer in the capacity of ſervants; and I ſhall exalt all my faithful followers to the privilege of being the proper ſons of God.

37. I know that you are the natural deſcendants of Abraham, but what will that avail you, when you act a part ſo unworthy of that relationſhip, as appears by your ſeeking to kill me, becauſe you diſlike my doctrine. 38. It is indeed true that both you and I adopt the ſentiments and imitate the conduct of our proper reſpective fathers. 39. They ſuſpecting from this that he was going to deny that they were the proper children of Abraham, ſaid, Certainly you will not deny that we are the children of Abraham in every proper ſenſe of the word. 40. But indeed, replies our Lord, I do deny it, for if you were the children of Abraham, in the ſenſe in which you may perceive that I now uſe the word, you would do the works of Abraham. But your ſeeking to kill me for telling you the truth is a proof that you are not the proper children of Abraham

ham, for certainly Abraham would not have done ſo. 41. You do the works of your proper father. They reply, Do you pretend that we are not the deſcendants of Abraham. but of Gentile families? We are certainly his ſeed, and in a moral ſenſe, of the ſame father that he had, even God.

42. Jeſus ſaid, if God were indeed your father, you would love me, becauſe I am come immediately from him, and do not come of myſelf. 43. And if you be of the ſame family with me, why do ye not underſtand my language? Is it not becauſe you are ſo prejudiced that you will not give due attention to me? 44. In fact your father in a moral ſenſe, is no other than the devil; becauſe you are wholly bent upon wickedneſs, and one of the firſt crimes that was committed in the world (and which it is uſual to aſcribe to him, as the nominal ſource and principle of evil) was a murder, viz. that of Abel by Cain. Lying and deceit are alſo of the ſame nature, and therefore are uſually aſcribed to the ſame origin, and for this reaſon, you cannot bear the plain truth that I have told you. 45. You cannot convict me of any falſehood, and yet you do not believe me. If you were, as you pretend to be, of God, you would attend to the word of God delivered by me, but your not regarding me proves that you are not of God, but of a different and oppoſite origin.

48. The Jews, irritated at his diſcourſe, ſaid, It appears ſufficiently that we are right in concluding that thou art no better than a Samaritan, or a Demoniac. 49. Jeſus replied, My conduct is far from being that of a de-

a demoniac. I honour my father, acting up to the commiſſion which I have received from him, and you revile me for it. 50. But this does not affect me, becauſe I am not ſolicitous about my own glory with perſons of your character. My glory is the care of him who ſees us, and will judge between us. 51. So greatly will he honour me, that all thoſe who hear and obey me, ſhall not die eternally.

52. Then ſaid the Jews, Now it is plain enough that thou art a demoniac. Abraham and all the prophets are dead, and yet thou pretendeſt that thy diſciples ſhall not die. 53. Art thou poſſeſſed of any prerogative over our father Abraham, or the prophets, who are all dead? Whom doſt thou pretend to be? 54. Jeſus replies, It is not that I pretend to be any thing of myſelf. All the honours that I have are thoſe which my father is pleaſed to confer upon me, and my father is he whom you call your God. 55. It is plain, however, that you know very little of him; but it is my perogative to have the moſt intimate knowledge of him; and if I ſhould deny, and not avow it, even to you who ridicule me for pretending to it, I ſhould be a liar as you are; but I do know him, and am wholly devoted to his will. 55. Moreover, great as you boaſt of your deſcent from Abraham, it would have been his greateſt happineſs to have ſeen the time of my coming into the world, and by faith he did ſee it, in ſure proſpect, and rejoiced at it.

57. How can that be, replied the Jews, who did not underſtand his meaning, Thou canſt not be fifty years old at moſt, and wert thou contemporary with Abraham.

braham? 58. I do aſſure you, ſaid Jeſus, that, in a very proper ſenſe of the words, I may be ſaid to have been even before Abraham, the Meſſiah having been held forth as the great object of hope and joy for the human race, not only to Abraham, but even to his anceſtors. 59. Upon this the Jews, unable to reſtrain their indignation any longer, would have ſtoned him, if he, being aware of their deſign, had not withdrawn himſelf from their purſuit.

SECTION LII.

Of the man who was blind from his birth.

John IX. 1——41.

JESUS never wrought more than two miracles at Jeruſalem of which we have any particular account; but they are both very remarkable for two circumſtances, as they are both peculiarly unqueſtionable, and both performed on the ſabbath day. The firſt was at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, of which we have an account in the fifth chapter of this goſpel. The ſubject was a perſon who had been ill thirty eight years, and had long waited at the pool of Bethesda, which was a public place; ſo that his perſon and his caſe muſt have been very generally known. Conſequently the ſuddenneſs of his cure would be very notorious, and could not be denied to be miraculous. And yet ſo great offence did the rulers of the Jews take at this benevolent miracle being

ing wrought on the ſabbath day, that from that time they formed a deſign upon his life.

The ſubject of the miracle of which we have an account in this chapter, is a man who had been *blind from his birth*, and who had got his living by begging in public, and perhaps no perſons are better known in any place than blind beggars. The cure of ſuch a perſon, therefore, would have all the effect that any miracle could have; ſo that if this failed to produce conviction, more miracles would have failed, and therefore would have been ſuperfluous. But even this miracle, being wrought on the ſabbath day, gave the ſame offence as the former.

This ſtory is particularly remarkable for the ſimplicity with which it is told, and the introduction of ſo many natural circumſtances as make it in a manner its own voucher; it being hardly poſſible for any man to have invented all the particulars.

2. It may perhaps be thought to deſerve mentioning, that it was the opinion of the Jewiſh Rabbi's, that bad diſpoſitions were formed even in the womb, ſo that ſtrictly ſpeaking, a man might begin to ſin, *before he was born.*

John IX. 2 *Who did ſin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind*] Pearce well obſerves, that this text is no proof of the Jews in general having adopted the doctrine of the pre-exiſtence of ſouls; becauſe the diſciples, not being certain that he was born blind, might mean, did this man ſin, and ſo became blind by the judgement of God upon himſelf; or, if he was born blind, was it owing to the ſin of his parents, and therefore a judge-

judgement upon them. The Jews mentioned, v. 8. did not believe that this man had been born blind, till they had applied to his parents. It is evident from Joſephus that the learned Jews, did afterwards adopt the doctrines of the ſeparate exiſtence, and pre-exiſtence of the ſoul (which always went together) but from the diſcourſe of Martha and Jeſus, John ii. it does not appear to have been ſo early as this. Indeed it does not appear that thoſe opinions were ever generally prevalent among them.

6. It was ſo common a thing to apply ointments and plaiſters to diſeaſed eyes, that this man might poſſibly imagine there was ſome medicinal virtue in what Jeſus did on this occaſion.

7. We cannot well imagine why the evangeliſt ſhould inform us that the word *Siloam* ſignified *ſent*, if he had not thought that Jeſus himſelf might allude to it; the phraſe *ſent*, or *he that ſhould come*, &c. being a well known name or title of the Meſſiah with the Jews.

13. Probably before a public court, where the Phariſees had the chief influence.

14. It was a particular deciſion of the Jewiſh doctors, that it was unlawful even to put ſpittle upon ſore eyes on the ſabbath day, this being a medicinal application, implying manual work.

16. By *ſinner* we are here to underſtand *impoſtor*.

30. It muſt indeed have appeared very extraordinary that a man capable of performing a real miracle ſhould be treated as an impoſtor, or even with neglect,

as

if they neither knew nor cared, who he was, which ſeems to be the meaning of what they ſay.

22. *Put out of the Synagogue*] The Jews had two kinds of excommunication, one which ſeparated them four cubits from the ſociety of others, but left them free, at that diſtance, to hear the law expounded in the ſynagogue. This was called *niddui*, the other was called *chematti*, anſwering, perhaps, to Maranatha in Syriac. This excluded a perſon from the ſynagogue for ever, and in other reſpects ſubjected a perſon to a variety of inconveniencies of a civil nature. This was probably the puniſhment that was generally inflicted on Chriſtians.

33. There is much good ſenſe and propriety, but which the Phariſees conſidered as inſolence, in this man's diſcourſe, ſo that it is no wonder that they were provoked at it.

34. *Born in ſin.*] A proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying being addicted to the moſt rooted evil habits, and from early years.

37. This was the third time that Jeſus owned himſelf to be the Meſſiah, to the woman of Samaria, to his diſciples in private, and now to this man, who was probably alone. None of them amount to a public declaration, ſuch as was likely to come to the knowledge of the Jewiſh Rulers. That he reſerved for a future occaſion.

39. The characters here oppoſed ſeem to be thoſe of the humble and ſincere enquirers, who are ſenſible of their ignorance and willing to receive inſtruction, and of the proud and opinionative, who reject whatever

claſhes with their preſent ſentiments; and the *ſin* here intended is that of rejecting the diſpenſation of the will of God now offered to the world.

PARAPHRASE.

John IX. 41. Jeſus ſaid unto them, If you were really blind, you would not be criminal, becauſe you would not have abuſed any light that was vouchſafed to you; but the knowledge that you have is an aggravation of your ſin in rejecting me.

SECTION LIII.

The Parable of the good Shepherd.

John X, 1.——21.

THIS is a continuation of the ſame diſcourſe, that Jeſus held with the Phariſees, which was begun in the laſt chapter, in which he had charged them with their guilt in rejecting him, and plotting againſt his life, notwithſtanding the evidence that he had given them of his divine miſſion.

1. In this parable Jeſus compares himſelf to *the good Shepherd*, and the Scribes and Phariſees *to thieves and robbers of the fold*, led to it perhaps by the pens of ſheep, which were kept either in the outer courts of the temple, or in ſome place near to it, for the purpoſe of ſacrifices; for he was not now in the open fields. It is the more likely to be ſo becauſe we find mention made of

of a *porter* who let in the ſhepherd, admitting him probably intothe place where his ſheep were kept, knowing that he was the owner.

This parable is a fine illuſtration of what he had juſt aſſerted, Ch. ix, 39. by ſhewing the ready obedience wherewith the humble and ſincere would embrace the goſpel, and the benefits they ſhould derive from thence. And the behaviour of the people after the delivery of the parable, as mentioned in the 20th and 21ſt verſes, ſtill farther confirmed both parts of that aſſertion by facts.

3. *Calleth his own sheep by name.*] It appears from hence, that it was the cuſtom with the Jewiſh ſhepherds to give names to their ſheep; and the cuſtom is alſo found among the Greeks, as appears from Theocritus.

In the Eaſt ſheep are accuſtomed to follow their ſhepherd.

7. As they did not underſtand him when he compared himſelf to a *shepherd*, he now changes the alluſion and calls himſelf *the door* through which we may be ſaid to enter into the ſheep-fold, or church of God, learning of him the true knowledge of God. To explain the ſame thing he elſewhere calls himſelf *the way*: *I am the way, the truth, and the life*, or I ſhew the way to eternal life.

8. Meaning probably the Scribes and Phariſees, the profeſſed leaders and guides of the people. For it does not appear that any who were before Jeſus had pretended to be the Meſſiah,

11. Jeſus here reverts to his original compariſon of himſelf to a *ſhepherd*. This frequent change of figures to repreſent the ſame thing may prepare us to underſtand that when Chriſt is called a *ſacrifice*, it was only by way of figure or compariſon, and that he was no more a proper ſacrifice, than he was really a door, or a ſhepherd. For he is ſaid to have been all of theſe. Every man who dies in a good cauſe may be ſaid to die a ſacrifice to it.

18. This can never mean, as ſome ſuppoſe, that Jeſus had ſo far power over his own life, that he could diſmiſs his ſpirit, and die whenever he pleaſed, without any apparent violence to himſelf. For tho' he might have had this, as well as any other miraculous power, it could not be his meaning in this place. It has indeed been ſuppoſed that he did, in this miraculous manner, diſmiſs his ſpirit, when he expired upon the croſs, after uttering *the ſtrong cry* that is mentioned in the account of his death. But there was probably a mixture of convulſion in that cry, and the effort would naturally contribute to exhauſt the little that remained of the powers of life. We no where find that he ſpared himſelf any pains or hardſhip, and leaſt of all would he do ſo, when he was to be an example of ſuffering death to his diſciples. For then he would have availed himſelf of an advantage, which they had not, and in fact would have ſet an example of ſelf murder. According to appearance, his death was the proper and natural effect of torture, after being exhauſted by his ſevere agony in the garden, and his other cruel ſufferings.

PAR-

PARAPHRASE.

John X. 8. All who have gone before me, or will come after me, pretending to be the Meſſiah, are impoſtors, whom thoſe that have the diſcernment that even ſheep have for their own ſhepherd, would not, and will not follow.

15 As the Father knows and honours me, ſo do I know and honour my Father, and in conformity to his will I even lay down my life for the ſheep, that is, my diſciples; and not only for thoſe of them who are Jews, but for thoſe Gentiles alſo, who in due time will be brought into my ſheepfold, by embracing my goſpel.

17. It is on account of this chearful and unreſerved obedience to his will, that God the Father loves me; and when I lay down my life he will ſhew his approbation of me, by enabling me to reſume it.

18. All this I ſubmit to voluntarily, and not becauſe I am compelled to it by my enemies, whom, if I pleaſed, I have power to diſarm and confound; but in obedience to my Father's known will and pleaſure, I ſhall both lay down my life, and take it again.

SECTION LIV.

The return of the Seventy. The Parable of the good Samaritan. Jesus entertained by Martha and Mary.

Luke X. 17——42.

LUKE has been obſerved to pay the leaſt regard to the order of time of any of the evangeliſts, ſo that it is difficult to arrange the order of thoſe events which are related by him only, as the miſſion and return of the ſeventy diſciples, mentioned in this place. They ſeem to have been ſent out as Jeſus was on his way from Galilee to the feaſt of tabernacles at Jeruſalem, but when they returned is quite uncertain; ſince they might attend at the feaſt, and then return to complete their miſſion. And where Jeſus was, and what he did, from the time of this feaſt to that of the dedication, which was in winter, we have no account whatever. I have therefore introduced into this place all the particulars mentioned by this evangeliſt from the tenth to the eighteenth chapter, which follow the mention that he has made of the return of the Seventy (as this muſt have been after the feaſt of tabernacles) and to which there is annexed no particular note of time.

17. We have no account of any particulars of the miſſions either of the *Twelve*, or of the *Seventy*; but it is evident that miracles were wrought by both theſe ſets of miſſionaries, and here mention is made of that kind which was always, and moſt juſtly, conſidered as one of the moſt extraordinary, viz. reſtoring to the per-

fect

fect uſe of their ſenſes thoſe who had been inſane; inſanity being incurable by natural means, except in a long courſe of time; ſo that to have produced this effect *instantaneously*, by a word ſpeaking, muſt have appeared very extraordinary indeed.

18. *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*; i. e. falling as rapidly as lightning ſeems to fall from heaven. By *Satan* is here meant the ſuppoſed cauſe of poſſeſſion, and may be extended to evils of all kinds, moral as well as natural.

19. This could not refer to any thing that took place during the miniſtry of Jeſus, but muſt refer to their miſſion after his aſcenſion. And this exemption from hurt only meant upon certain occaſions, when their deliverance would anſwer the end of a miracle, to convince the world of their divine miſſion. On ordinary occaſions, neither Jeſus himſelf, nor any of his followers, were exempt from the common evils of life, or from the greater calamities incident to their profeſſion in time of perſecution. Accordingly the apoſtle Paul enumerates more of his ſufferings than fall to the common lot of men; and moſt of the apoſtles, as well as Jeſus himſelf, died violent deaths. For this no recompence can be made but in the world to come.

20. i. e. Moral virtue, ſuch as will intitle men to the happineſs of heaven, is of infinitely more value than any miraculous gifts. Accordingly Jeſus ſuppoſes that, at the laſt day, ſome may plead that they even worked miracles in his name, who yet would be rejected by him.

21. Our Lord here expreſſes himſelf in a manner partly ſimilar to that in which Matthew repreſents him as delivering himſelf on the return of the twelve. Matt. xi, 25.

It was more conducive to the great end of the propagation of the goſpel, that the firſt converts ſhould not be perſons diſtinguiſhed for their wealth, their power, or their ability; becauſe, in after ages, it might then have been ſaid, that it was by power, or by addreſs, that mankind were drawn into the ſcheme. But none of the apoſtles were more than plain honeſt men, who could not have been deceived themſelves with reſpect to what they heard and ſaw, and yet were incapable of impoſing upon others, had they been ſo inclined. They had neither wealth to bribe men, power to compel them, or addreſs to cajole them. They were believed, becauſe it was manifeſt that they told the truth, and the truth which they had no viſible intereſt in telling, and eſpecially in ſuffering and dying for.

24. They had wiſhed to ſee the times of the Meſſiah which are foretold in the ancient prophets. It was a happineſs to live in times in which the great diſpenſations of God reſpecting mankind were ſo much farther advanced than they were in the time of thoſe prophets. But it is a greater happineſs to live in our times when they are more advanced ſtill, when chriſtianity has recovered itſelf from many of the corruptions and abuſes which were introduced into it; and when we have a nearer proſpect of its univerſal ſpread, and univerſal utility.

28 We

28. We ſee here that Jeſus had no new moral doctrines to teach. In this reſpect he only explained the law and the prophets in their original extent; and on theſe moral duties he laid the ſame ſtreſs as the prophets of old had done, who urged them as the only means by which men could be accepted of God. How different is this from the doctrine that ſome profeſſing chriſtians teach, who ſay that we are to be ſaved not by any thing that we can do for ourſelves, which Jeſus plainly ſuppoſes, but by ſomething that he ſhould do for us; a doctrine to which nothing that he, or the apoſtles, ever advanced gave the leaſt countenance.

30. An excellent parable to ſhew that we are not to inquire into the relation that an object of diſtreſs bears to us. It is enough that the afflicted are men, and therefore feel as we ſhould do in the ſame circumſtances.

The ſcene of this parable is with great propriety laid in the road between Jeruſalem and Jericho, which was mountainous, and very convenient for robbers. One particular paſs is ſtill called the *mountain of blood*, or *the bloody road* (*Shaw's Travels*, p. 276) a name probably acquired from the murders of paſſengers.

This is a beautiful incident in the life of Jeſus, and ſhews how intent he always was upon the diſcharge of the great duties of his miſſion, to teach men the will of God, and to poſtpone every thing elſe to it. Martha was not ill employed, but Jeſus thought that ſhe buſied herſelf more than there was any real occaſion for. From other circumſtances in the hiſtory of theſe two women,

it is

it is probable they were both equally excellent characters, and accordingly Jeſus had a particular reſpect for them both, as well as for their brother Lazarus, whom we ſhall find he raiſed from the dead.

34. Places to accommodate travellers in the Eaſt are of very different kinds. In moſt of them there is only room to receive them and their goods. But in others, perſons are appointed to attend, and ſupply them with any thing that they want.

35. *Two pence,*] i. e. two Roman denarii, which make about ſix pence, as much as a traveller might have to ſpare.

42. *One thing is needful;*] i. e. the things relating to eternal life.

PARAPHRASE.

Luke X. 22, All things relating to the kingdom of righteouſneſs which God will erect in the world, are committed to me. The Father alone knows the full extent of my powers and commiſſion; and that knowledge of God which was reſerved for this diſpenſation, cannot be communicated to the world but by me.

SEC.

SECTION LV.

Jesus inveighs against the Pharisees, and against Covetousness.

Luke XI. 37——54. XII. 13——21.

IT appears from what passed at the entertainment of which we have an account in this place, that the invitation was probably made with a captious intent; and indeed the extreme severity with which Jesus treated the whole company, can hardly be justified upon any other supposition. For it does not appear that, on proper occasions, he was ever wanting in candour or civility.

40. By *that which is within*, Jesus evidently meant the heart, or the inward disposition of the mind, having before said that *their inward part was full of ravening and wickedness*. And certainly if a respect to any thing, as that which God respects, be a reason for our attention to it, the heart of man is that which deserves our chief regard; the affections of the heart being the foundation of all good conduct, and consequently of all acceptance with God.

41. The chief outline of the character of these Pharisees against whom Jesus inveighs with so much vehemence, was their addictedness to the vices of avarice and hypocrisy; and therefore he speaks of *alms* on this occasion. How opposite was the doctrine that Jesus here

here taught to the maxims of the Phariſees, who laid the chief ſtreſs on trifling punctilios of conduct; and who overlooked the weightier and more important matters of the law.

Luke XI. 44. *Graves which appear not,*] as with graſs growing over them, ſo that if they be ſhut men ſtumble upon them, and if they be open they fall into them, and are defiled with the touch of the dead body.

45. To be a *doctor*, or teacher of the law, was probably an office, whereas *Phariſee* was the name of a ſect; but it is probable that the doctors were chiefly Phariſees. In what reſpects they differed from the *Scribes* does not clearly appear. Perhaps they are the ſame who are ſometimes called *Lawyers*, being employed as our advocates, or attornies, in courts of juſtice. And it muſt be obſerved, that the law of Moſes was the civil law of the Jews, as the Koran is that of the Mahometans, the deciſions in the courts of juſtice being regulated by it.

48. i. e. Notwithſtanding you think to do honour to the prophets, by building them magnificent ſepulchres, yet your tempers and conduct ſo much reſemble thoſe of your fathers who killed them, that the building of the ſepulchres may ſeem to be the act of thoſe who approved of their murder, the one finiſhing what the other had begun, the fathers putting them to death, and the ſons burying them.

49. The correſponding paſſages in Matt. 23, 34, It is only *I will ſend*, without this circumſtance of *the wiſdom of God*, which makes it look as if it had a reference

ence to ſome paſſage in the prophets, whereas no ſuch thing is found in them. It is probable, therefore, that by this phraſe nothing more was meant than that God, in his wiſdom, would ſend them the prophets he ſpeaks of.

51. *The blood of Zacharias, who periſhed between the temple and the altar ;*] referring, probably to that Zachariah who is ſaid 2 Chron. xxiv, 20. to have been ſlain in that very place. He is there ſaid to be the ſon of Jehoiada ; and as Zachariah the prophet, was the ſon of Barachiah, this Zachariah is ſo called in Matthew xxiii. 35. The miſtake was probably made by ſome tranſcriber, who thought to explain who this Zachariah was, or it might have been written haſtily by Matthew himſelf.

52. It is ſaid that the authority to teach the law among the Jews was given by the delivery of a key, as a ſymbol of their office. One of their Rabbi's is ſaid to have had his key buried with him.

54. From this it appears that the whole company were met with this captious deſign ; but Jeſus, without ſparing them, gave them no particular handle for their malicious purpoſe.

Luke XII. 18. &c. It does not appear at what period of his miniſtry Jeſus delivered the diſcourſes contained in this chapter ; but they conſiſt of excellent inſtructions, adapted to all times, and to perſons in all ſituations of life.

As many of the ancient prophets were judges, and acted in a civil capacity ; this man might apply to Jeſus without any captious deſign. His reply, however, ſhews

ſhews that his buſineſs was not to act as a temporal judge, but in a much higher capacity; and therefore he takes occaſion from it to give advice ſuited particularly to the caſe of thoſe perſons who, through covetouſneſs, could not agree about the diviſion of an eſtate, and in general to all perſons under the influence of the ſame low principle.

15. His life does not depend upon the abundance of his poſſeſſions. He is ſtill ſubject to death, tho' ever ſo rich. W'

19. *I will say to my soul.*] The word ſoul ſeems to be often uſed to denote the *percipient faculties*. Thus God himſelf is repreſented as ſaying, *My soul shall have no pleasure in him*, and as making uſe of other expreſſions of the ſame kind. It could not, therefore, imply that the Divine Being conſiſted of two principles, of which the ſoul was only one. In fact, the expreſſion is only equivalent to *myself*. It could not be uſed in any other ſenſe in this place; for what is properly called *a soul* cannot *eat and drink*.

20. *This night shall thy soul be required of thee.*] i. e. This night thy *life* ſhall be taken from thee, or, this night thou ſhalt die.

21. Whoſe treaſure is with God, or laid up in his cuſtody, and of which he will give an account at the laſt.

PARAPHRASE.

Luke XI 48. In fact, when your conduct is compared with that of your forefathers, notwithſtanding this token of reſpect which you pay to the dead prophets, one would imagine

imagine, that it had a contrary meaning, and that they were the ſame kind of perſons who both killed the prophets and buried them, the burial being but a continuation of the ſame proceeding.

SECTION LVI.

Of the Galileans whom Pilate ſlew. The parable of the Vineyard, and the Cure of an infirm Woman.

Luke XIII. 1——17.

OUR Saviour's moſt inſtructive diſcourſes were generally occaſioned by incidental circumſtances; and this muſt have given them peculiar force. In many of them we find that he had a view to peculiar circumſtances of the Jewiſh nation, a nation then ripe for deſtruction, which could only be averted by ſincere repentance. This, therefore, was the great burthen of the preaching of Jeſus, as well as that of John the Baptiſt before him, and of the apoſtles after them both. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, repent and be converted that your ſins may be blotted out,* was the ſubſtance of all their addreſſes, and this is a ſubject that can never be unſeaſonable. All men are ſinners, and therefore ſtand in need of repentance, and unleſs that repentance be in *time*, it will be of no avail.

1. *Galileans.*] Probably the followers of Judas Gaulonites, who had before put himſelf at the head of a ſect of Jews, who maintained that God was their only ſovereign, and that ſubjection to the Romans, or any earthly

earthly power ought not to be ſuffered. It was to him, probably, that Gamaliel alluded, Acts vi. 37.

2. Many of the Jews did ſuffer in the ſame manner, great numbers of them being ſlain in the temple, which they uſed as a fortification in their war with the Romans.

6. It was uſual to couple *vines* with *fig trees*, that the one might be ſupported by the other.

8. It ſhould ſeem that we are not to underſtand by this the digging with a ſpade about a fig tree, for ſpades were not uſed in vineyards; but the turning up of the ground between the rows of the trees with an inſtrument drawn by oxen. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 43. As this, however, was a *fig tree*, and not a *vine*, it might be treated in a manner different from vines, tho' planted in the vineyard.

9. This parable has the ſame object with the preceding, viz. to ſhew the neceſſity of repentance in time.

It is ſaid not to be cuſtomary in the Eaſt to do more in an orchard than plow the ground between the trees. Here ſomething more was propoſed, in order to give the tree the greater advantage.

11. The Jews aſcribed almoſt every obſtinate diſorder to the influence of ſome evil ſpirit, giving the ſpirit the name of the particular diſeaſe. Thus we read of an *unclean ſpirit*, to ſignify a diſeaſe which led perſons into circumſtances which in the Jewiſh law made them unclean. In like manner *a deaf and a dumb ſpirit*, means the cauſe of deafneſs and dumbneſs, and what is here called *a ſpirit of infirmity*, only means a diſorder that rendered a perſon infirm.

13 The

13. The miraculous nature of the cures performed by Jeſus is evident from the nature of the diſeaſes that were cured by him. Thus this perſon had been infirm eighteen years, ſo that, according to the courſe of nature, no ſpeedy relief could be expected. Alſo, when a perſon through weakneſs has become crooked, and on that account unable to walk upright, which was the caſe with this woman, being ſuddenly enabled to walk erect, was as evident a proof of a power properly miraculous, as any thing that could be propoſed.

14. The perverſeneſs of this Jewiſh ruler of the ſynagogue appears in his not addreſſing himſelf to Jeſus, but only to the people who came to be cured. Beſides, any perſon, not under the influence of the moſt unreaſonable prejudice, would have concluded that a man who acted, as Jeſus did, by the immediate power of God, could not do an unlawful thing.

15. This was allowed by the moſt ſcrupulous of the Jews, tho' they thought it wrong to go to fetch water for their cattle.

17. It is evident from this, and many other circumſtances, that the bulk of the Jewiſh nation did not adopt all the idle diſtinctions of their teachers, and that they were not all influenced by their prejudices and malice. Beſides, the rulers of the nation expected to reign with their Meſſiah, and to enjoy high offices under him, which could not be the caſe with the common people; and tho' the Scribes and Phariſees might clearly ſee that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, they had no favour to expect from him.

PARAPHRASE.

Luke XIII. 2. Do not ſuppoſe that theſe Galileans were greater ſinners than the reſt of the Jewiſh nation, who are all ripe for deſtruction; but this was permitted, that the reſt might take warning, and repent. Whether theſe individuals were good or bad men, perſonally conſidered, makes no difference in this caſe. Such events are intended to awaken and alarm all.

SECTION LVII.

The Cure of the Man who had a Dropsy. Of Humility, and of Suffering in the Cause of Christ.

Luke XIV. 1——33.

THO' the Jews reſted from labour on the Sabbath, they did not abſtain from feaſting, and receiving their friends. On the contrary, they rather preferred that day for the purpoſe, nor was this imagined by them to be inconſiſtent with the religious exerciſes of the ſynagogue. It is probable that this invitation, like the former, was made with a captious deſign.

2. This man was probably preſented with the knowledge of the heſt. For being a perſon of conſiderable conſequence, a diſeaſed man would hardly have obtruded himſelf upon the company without leave.

3. As thus ſtated, the Jews could not ſay that what Jeſus propoſed was unlawful. For they only objected

to

to *medicinal applications*, as being a ſpecies of *bodily labour*.

4. This you will obſerve, was the cure of a diſorder that could not by natural means have been cured ſo ſoon.

5. The Jews acknowledge that where life was in danger, labour was lawful, even on the Sabbath day.

7. The Phariſees were particularly ſcrupulous about placing perſons according to their rank with reſpect to their knowledge in the law, on which account chiefly they were revered by the common people. This advice of Jeſus is properly an admonition concerning decency and propriety of behaviour, which the fondneſs of the Phariſees for popular applauſe led them to violate.

11. This obſervation is made, ſome have ſaid, no leſs than ten times in the New Teſtament; and it is certainly of the greateſt importance; an humble temper of mind implying a deep ſenſe of dependance upon God, which is the foundation of almoſt every thing that is excellent in man; and the oppoſite diſpoſition leads to every thing that is the reverſe of the chriſtian temper. In the Old Teſtament the *proud* and the *wicked* are commonly uſed as ſynonymous terms.

12. It is poſſible that this Phariſee had, out of oſtentation, invited the moſt conſiderable perſons of his acquaintance to this entertainment, at which Jeſus was to be preſent.

Call not thy friends.] Our Lord could not mean that friends are not to entertain one another, but from the turn of the whole he appears to mean,

"If you would make a feaſt from which you would de-
"rive real merit, and which will turn to your greateſt
"account, make one for which no recompenſe can be
"made by man, but by God only."

13. It is cuſtomary in the Eaſt after a ſumptuous entertainment, to call in the poor to eat up all that remains of the feaſt; and hoſpitable perſons will often call poor ſtrangers and others, to partake of their dinner, rather than dine alone.

14. It is very obſervable that not only upon this occaſion, but on all others, in the New Teſtament, the promiſe of the reward of virtue is repreſented as taking place at the general reſurrection, and not before, ſo that the doctrine of an *intermediate state* of happineſs and miſery from the time of death to the reſurrection, is no doctrine of the Scriptures. In no paſſage whatever is *the body* ſaid to be in one place, and the *ſoul* with its thinking faculties in another. The dead are ſaid to *ſleep in Jeſus*; *their lives being hid with Christ in God, that when Christ who is*, or has poſſeſſion, as it were of *their life*, or to whoſe keeping they are committed, *ſhall appear*; *then*, but not before *ſhall they appear with him in glory*. With reſpect to the apoſtles themſelves Jeſus ſaid, *I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be alſo.*

15. *Eat bread*, &c.] i. e. Who ſhall live in the times of the Meſſiah, and enjoy the felicities of his reign.

26. *Hate not his father and mother.*] The meaning is, that we ſhould prefer the cauſe of Chriſt to all earth-

ly

ly conſiderations. So alſo when it is ſaid, *Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated*, the meaning is, I have loved Jacob more than Eſau. Pearce produces other phraſes of the like import.

Here our Lord admoniſhes us that the profeſſion of chriſtianity is a ſerious thing, and requires great firmneſs of mind, if we mean to live up to the profeſſion, and ſecure the proper and great rewards of it.

33. We ought therefore to conſider well with ourſelves, whether we are determined to maintain the profeſſion and practice of chriſtianity at all riſques. Without this we are no chriſtians, but merely *men of the world*, who *follow the multitude*, which happens to be what is called chriſtian; but who from the ſame principle would have been Mahometans or Pagans. To be *chriſtians indeed*, we muſt be ſo in principle, and from reflection, weighing well the truth and the value of the profeſſion, and determined to give up every thing, even life itſelf, that may be required by it.

SECTION LVIII.

The parable of the loſt ſheep, the loſt piece of money, and of the prodigal ſon.

Luke XV. 1——32.

THE diſcourſes in this chapter ſeem to follow that of the laſt. But as Jeſus here addreſſes himſelf to publicans and ſinners only, tho' in the hear-

ing of the Phariſees, it is not probable that he was now in the houſe of the chief Phariſee, with whom he had dined.

1. &c. Theſe parables ſhew, in a ſtriking manner, that as we give more attention to what we are in the moſt danger of loſing; ſo our Lord was juſtified in beſtowing more time upon ſinners, to bring them to repentance, than upon others.

Publicans, or thoſe perſons who collected the tribute for the Romans, were held in great abhorrence by the Jews, to whom the Roman yoke was very galling; thinking it both diſgraceful, and in a manner unlawful. For many of them thought it their duty, at all riſques, to emancipate themſelves from it. The publicans are commonly joined with *ſinners*, or infamous perſons; and in general when an office is infamous, it will be filled with perſons of infamous character. On this, and on many other occaſions, the diſcourſes of Jeſus are calculated to expoſe the pride and ſelf conceit of the Phariſees; ſhewing his own conduct, and that of his father, to be the reverſe of their's; in not deſpiſing, or rejecting, the loweſt, and even the moſt abandoned of men, but kindly receiving them upon their return to their duty.

9. For tho' this piece of ſilver, being only a drachma, or eight pence of our money, was ſmall in itſelf, it was a tenth part of her whole ſubſtance.

10. This was a cuſtomary phraſe with the Jews; but they generally applied it to the fall of ſinners, not their repentance.

11 This

11. This is perhaps the moſt beautiful and inſtructive of all our Saviour's parables, and abounds with the moſt important leſſons, ſpeculative and practical; exhibiting more eſpecially a lively and affecting repreſentation of the placability of God to penitent ſinners, without atonement, and without upbraiding. Some think that this parable was intended to repreſent the ſtate of the Jews and Gentiles, the former being compared to the elder ſon, and the latter to the younger.

12. Probably not the half, becauſe the elder ſon, according to the law of Moſes, was intitled to a double portion of his father's property.

In the Eaſt the laws of inheritance are generally ſuch, that it is not in the power of any parent to refuſe to give any of his children a certain proportion of his property when they come to age, much leſs to bequeath their property to whom they pleaſe by will.

15. *Feeding hogs* was an employment very diſagreeable to a Jew.

20. It is uſual to kiſs the ſhoulder in embracing. *See Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 53.

21. You will obſerve that this penitent ſon had not finiſhed what he propoſed to ſay, being prevented by the compaſſion of his father.

22. All theſe circumſtances ſhew that he was not to be received as a *ſervant*, which was all that he ſolicited, but as a *ſon*; and his cordial reception is given him without the leaſt hint of any ſatisfaction being made to his offended juſtice. The return of the penitent was of itſelf the moſt pleaſing, and a ſufficient atonement.

28. This repreſents the envious jealous temper of the Scribes and Phariſees; tho' the character is far from being ſo bad as theirs. So much joy on the reception of a profligate brother, who had already received and diſſipated his ſhare of the inheritance, might juſtly alarm the elder, as if he was to have been diſinherited, or at leaſt deprived of his proper right.

30. He does not, you will obſerve, call him his *brother*, but ſpeaking to the father, calls him *his ſon*. But, in return, the father, ſpeaking to the ſon calls him *his brother*, thereby reminding him of his relation to him, and of his obligation to rejoice in every event that was favourable to him.

31. This addreſs does not expreſs diſpleaſure, but is calculated to allay his jealouſy and apprehenſions on his own account.

32. He is far from ſaying that this youngeſt ſon would be put upon a level with the elder, who had always remained with him, or that he would even give him the ſhare of his patrimony which he had waſted. He would only be placed above the rank of a ſervant, and would probably be entitled to farther favours as his conduct ſhould deſerve.

This parable, therefore, does not authorize penitent ſinners to expect that they will ever be treated ſtrictly ſpeaking, as if they had never offended. Every perſon will probably be the worſe for his ſins of every kind as long as he continues to exiſt, though he will undoubtedly be a gainer by his repentance, and have it in his power to acquire great degrees of virtue and happineſs. And this ſeems to be much more than the Phariſees were diſpoſed to allow. Several

veral of our Saviour's parables and diſcourſes muſt have been very impertinent if the Phariſees had ſuppoſed that much favour would be ſhewn to penitents. The Phariſee, in the temple probably ſaw the humility, and marks of penitence, in the Publican who was worſhipping along with him; but ſtill entertained a very unfavourable opinion of his ſtate with reſpect to God, as well as a very high one of his own.

SECTION LIX.

The Parables of the unjuſt Steward, and of the rich Man and Lazarus.

Luke XVI. 1.——31.

THO' the parables in this chapter are addreſſed to the diſciples of Jeſus, they evidently reſpect the Phariſees, as well as thoſe in the preceding chapter. Among other things, the Phariſees were remarkable for their *covetouſneſs* and *ſenſuality*. The firſt parable in this chapter is directed againſt the former and the ſecond againſt the latter of theſe vices. In the firſt we are reminded that whatever we enjoy, we are but ſtewards, who will be required to give an account of every thing that we are entruſted with, and are therefore exhorted to make a wiſe uſe of it.

3. He could not dig, that is, he could not apply to huſbandry. Tho' by way of excuſe he ſays that he *could not* do it, the inability muſt be ſuppoſed to proceed not

not from want of bodily ſtrength, but from diſinclination, ariſing from his having lived a leſs laborious life.

5. By *debtor* we are probably to underſtand a *tenant*, and what are here called *debts* were probably *annual rents*, which, as a ſteward, impowered to grant leaſes, he might have ſome pretence for leſſening.

6. The meaſure of oil was probably a *bath*, which was between ſeven and eight of our gallons.

7. The meaſure of wheat was probably *an homer*, which was between ſeven and eight of our buſhels.

8 *And the Lord commended the unjuſt ſteward*;] not for his injuſtice, but for his prudence, which may be practiced with perfect innocence, and is then a great advantage.

9. i. e. Make the beſt uſe of theſe deceitful and uncertain riches, employ them in ſuch a manner in this life, as will be moſt for your intereſt in the life to come.

10. Since it is the diſpoſition of mind that leads to juſtice or injuſtice, in all caſes; if a man be *juſt*, *honeſt*, or faithful *in principle*, he will be ſo in ſmall things, as well as in great ones:

12. Things which paſs from one to another, and therefore can hardly be called a *man's own*, and ſuch are all worldly poſſeſſions. W.

19. This parable ſhews the Phariſees that they might be as diſtinguiſhed as poſſible in this world by all its pleaſures and its honours, and yet find themſelves wretched hereafter; This ſhews at the ſame time how incorrigible many of them were, in not having been reclaimed

reclaimed by the conſtant reading of Moſes and the prophets.

21. By *desiring* is implied his not obtaining his deſire. He is repreſented as quite neglected, his ſores not ſo much as covered.

22 It is evident that this parable does not repreſent the ſoul as a ſubſtance diſtinct from the body, but is formed upon the idea of the whole man being removed into a future ſtate before the uſual time. For when the beggar dies, it is not ſaid that *his soul*, but that *he himself* was carried into Abraham's boſom. It is alſo the *rich man*, and not *his soul* only, that lifted up his eyes in hell; and the pains he complains of are ſuch as could affect his body only. Alſo when Abraham ſpeaks of Lazarus returning to the world, he evidently refers to a real *reſurrection*; *neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the dead.* The general reſurrection is never mentioned in any other terms.

By *Abraham's bosom* we are to underſtand a ſeat next to him at an entertainment, as a place of the moſt diſtinguiſhed honour.

25. Abraham is repreſented as uſing no unneceſſary reproaches. His calling him *ſon* may intimate pity rather than reproach, for not having lived as became his ſon. Both the characters, you will obſerve, are drawn in the extreme, with reſpect to the difference of their condition, both in reſpect to this life and the next.

26. The Jews, no doubt, originally ſuppoſed that the dead were without ſenſe or feeling; but ſtill they were occaſionally *perſonified*, as the heavens and the earth

earth, and other things without life, frequently, are by the antient prophets. Thus the dead ſuppoſed to be in a place under ground, where the bodies were depoſited, are repreſented in this figurative way by Zachariah Ch. xiv, 9. as if they were ſtill living, and ſuſceptible of joy and ſorrow. Thus the Jews and other nations might come to conceive of all the dead as being in ſome place provided for them under ground, and having a kind of ſociety among themſelves. Afterwards, when the ſouls of men were ſuppoſed to be conſcious, they were ſtill ſuppoſed to be confined in ſome place within, or under the earth, and the good and bad were ſuppoſed to be in ſeparate places. But the idea of ſouls being confined under the earth, would never have occurred to thoſe who conceived it to be an immaterial and ætherial ſubſtance, the natural tendency of which would be upwards, and not downwards. But having firſt conſidered the dead as being under the ground, without life or ſoul, and afterwards conſidered them as having a ſoul, they would naturally, in that progreſs of their ideas, conſider the ſouls, or ſhades, of the dead as being in the ſame place where the dead had been. It was more than a thouſand years before chriſtians had any idea of the ſouls of men going to heaven immediately after death. For they were ſuppoſed to be in a place under ground, called *hades*, waiting for the reſurrection of the body; and they were not ſuppoſed to go to heaven, ſo as to be with God and Chriſt, till then.

28. As this rich man makes no mention of his wife, or children, he ſeems to have been a profligate youth, whoe

whoſe vices had ruined his conſtitution, and brought him to an untimely end.

31. We are not to infer from this that all men will equally reſiſt all means of converſion. But the evidence of the divine miſſion of Moſes being as undeniable to a Jew as any truth could be, thoſe perſons who were not influenced by his writings, would find ſome means or other of evading the force of any other evidence, even that of their own ſenſes.

If, in our Saviour's time, the evidence of a perſon riſing from the dead was not ſuperior to that of the divine miſſion of Moſes, much more would ſuch a miracle be inſignificant to us, to whom the evidence of a future ſtate is abundantly clearer than it was to the Jews. If we really believe the goſpel hiſtory, and the principles of chriſtianity deduced from it, nothing more can be done to influence our conduct. Even our ſeeing a man riſe from the dead would not weigh any thing more with us.

PARAPHRASE.

Luke XVI. 9. As this ſteward, by his behaviour in his ſtewardſhip, ſecured friends againſt the time when he ſhould be deprived of his office, I adviſe you to apply your wealth in this world in ſuch a manner, as to ſecure yourſelf friends in another.

10. And not the rich only, but even the pooreſt, may follow the ſame maxim; for he whoſe diſpoſition leads him to juſtice and charity, will be juſt and charitable, whether he has little or much. If, therefore, you have made

made a bad uſe of the things of this world, how can you expect that things of more conſequence will be entruſted to you. If you have been unfaithful in a truſt as ſtewards, how can you expect to be rewarded by your employer, with an eſtate of your own.

SECTION LX.

The duty of a ſervant, the Parable of the unjuſt Judge, and of the Publican and Phariſee.

Luke XVII. 7——10. XVIII. 1——14.

THE three articles of which the ſection that I am going to recite conſiſts, may be conſidered as intended to teach us a proper diſpoſition of mind with reſpect to God, eſpecially that temper which we ſhould bring before him when we *pray*, viz. the deepeſt *humility* and *patience*, to wait for whatever he ſhall beſtow upon us.

7. The connection of this obſervation with what precedes it in the ſame chapter is not very evident. But what Jeſus obſerves in this place was perhaps intended as a caution to his diſciples, not to be puffed up with ſuch extraordinary gifts as they would afterwards be endued with, equivalent to a power of removing mountains; and an admonition that if, with theſe extraordinary powers, they ſhould do nothing more than what was preſcribed to them, they would not have title to any ſpecial favour.

If

If the point were placed after ἐρεῖ, and εὐθέως joined with ἀνάπεσαι the meaning would be more clear, and the contraſt obvious--*will say unto him, when he is come from the field, Go and ſit down to meat* IMMEDIATELY? *And will not rather ſay unto him, make ready wherewith I may ſup, and gird thyſelf and ſerve me, till I have eaten and drunk; and* AFTERWARD *thou ſhalt eat and drink.* T.

10. *Unprofitable ſervant.*] i. e. that is mean and inſignificant, having no claim to any reward, the language of humility. The parable is deſigned to inculcate humility and ſubmiſſion with reſpect to God, from whom whatever we receive is from pure goodneſs.

Luke XVIII. 1. &c. This parable could not be intended to recommend a teizing importunity, but an humble and patient waiting for the divine bleſſing, tho' it be long delayed; and to ſhew that, if even bad men will hear reaſon at length, much more may it be expected that God will condeſcend to hear a reaſonable requeſt.

3. i. e. Do me juſtice.

7. i. e. Not being unrighteous as the judge, but gracious and merciful, and therefore previouſly ſuppoſed to hear every reaſonable petition, as that of this woman was.

Tho' he delay their cauſe ever ſo long. W.

8. *Shall he find faith.*] i. e. faith in this particular promiſe, concerning his coming to judge either Jeruſalem, or the world; the former of which events happened contrary to general expectation, and ſo probably will the latter too.

9. The former parable teaches us *patience*, and this *humility* in prayer. And humility is the foundation of gratitude, and every other good diſpoſition which can recommend us to God.

10. &c. The Phariſee in words aſcribes all to God, at the ſame time that he diſcovers the greateſt pride, haughtineſs, and contempt of the poor publican.

11. This Phariſee ſeems to have no other reaſon for thinking well of himſelf than becauſe, in his own idea, he was not ſo bad as thoſe whom he conſidered as the worſt of mankind. And except his faſting, and paying tithes, which the law obliged him to do, all that he boaſts of are things of a merely negative nature. He does not ſo much as pretend to any one poſitive and active virtue, ſuch as benevolence, and generoſity. On ſuch weak foundations do many build their hope of the favour of God, crying *peace peace to themſelves*, as the prophet ſays, when *there is no peace*.

13. As the proud Phariſee could ſee nothing but his virtues; ſo this humble Publican can ſee nothing but his vices. But in both reſpects God ſees what we overlook. Happy will it be for thoſe who, attending chiefly to their imperfections, are continually endeavouring to improve themſelves. At the laſt day, the righteous are repreſented as diſclaiming thoſe virtues, for which they had been the moſt diſtinguiſhed, and which their judge calls to their remembrance.

SEC-

SECTION LXI.

Jesus declares that he is the Messiah at the feast of Dedication.

John X. 22——42.

JOHN is the only evangelist who mentions distinctly, and in their order, all the public festivals at which Jesus attended at Jerusalem, and what he did at those times, especially the discourses which upon these occasions he held with the Jews; and they all relate to the evidence of his divine mission, and indirectly that of his being the Messiah; as if the design of John had been to shew that, if either his *miraculous works*, or his own just *reasoning* from them, would have convinced the Jews of his being sent of God, they would have believed in him, and their calamities have been prevented.

22. The feast of dedication was in commemoration of the cleansing of the temple, after the profanation of it by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was celebrated eight days, beginning the twenty fifth of the Jewish month *Cislev*, which corresponds to our December. It was likewise, in effect, the æra of their asserting their liberties, after their subjection to the kings of Syria. From this time they were governed by kings of their own, till they were reduced by the Romans.

23. Solomon's portico was to the East of the temple, looking over a deep valley, through which ran the

brook Kedron, which ſeparated the city from the mount of Olives. Part of this valley had been filled up to ſupport this portico. Tho' this work had been probably deſtroyed, together with the temple of Solomon, by the Babylonians, yet another being built on the ſame ground, retained the ſame name. This portico is alſo mentioned in the book of Acts. The temple was well furniſhed with theſe porticos, or piazzas, and they were exceedingly convenient for thoſe who attended there, either in the heat of ſummer, or the rains of winter.

24. Jeſus had indirectly called himſelf the Meſſiah, but they wiſhed him to do it in ſo many words; and no doubt for ſome inſidious purpoſe. For when he did avow it, in the moſt open manner, before the Sanhedrim, they were ſo far from being favourably impreſſed by it, that, on this very account, they pronounced him to be worthy of death, and accuſed him to the Roman governor of aſſuming the character of a king.

25. Not in ſo many words, but in language fully equivalent, and by ſuch *actions* as were ſufficient to aſcertain his character.

26. 27. Read the paſſage thus, 26. *But ye believe not; for ye are not of my sheep.* 27. *As I said unto you;* (v. iv. 14.) *my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* T.

30 Much uſe has been made of this text to prove that Chriſt is God, equal to the father. But there are ſeveral ſenſes in which two perſons very different in point of rank may be ſaid to be one. Literally ſpeaking, the thing is impoſſible. For then the *Father* and *Son* would not only be *equal*, but the *very same*, and therefore

fore could not be diſtinguiſhed by the different titles and offices of *Father* and *Son*. This union of Chriſt with God, whatever it be, is, as we learn from Chriſt himſelf, of the ſame nature with that which ſubſiſts between all his diſciples and himſelf, and between them and God. For in his prayer John xvii, 11. he ſays, *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one as we are.* He repeats the ſame ſentiments more fully v. 22. ſaying, *and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me.*

31. i. e. *brought* ſtones, for ſo the word ſignifies, there being no looſe ſtones for that purpoſe either in, or near the temple:

This ſhews a predetermination to put him to death by ſtoning.

35. *Unto whom the word of God came.*] Pearce would render it *with whom the judgment of God was*, referring to thoſe perſons, who by adminiſtering juſtice, ſtood, as it were, in the place of God.

38. It appears very clearly by the reply of Jeſus, that the Jews did not accuſe him of pretending to be God equal to the Father. He juſtifies himſelf upon the principle of other perſons being called Gods, from their having an office reſembling that of god; and to this he, who acted by a more immediate commiſſion from God, had a better title. The evidence of this was his works, which he always aſcribed to the father,

and never to himself. Of this we have an example in this very verse. *If I do not the works of my Father believe me not. But if I do, tho' ye believe not me, believe the works that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.* This corresponds to what he says in another place, of the *Father within him doing the works.* This is by no means the language of a person who ascribed any proper divinity to himself. It is directly disclaiming all divinity, and indeed all power above that of any other man, and ascribing it to God only.

39. To take him, not to stone him; for which they had no pretence, but to carry him before the Sanhedrim, in order to obtain a judicial sentence against him.

41. The inhabitants of this country were the best judges of some part of the evidence of the divine mission of Jesus, as they must have had the most distinct recollection of the testimony of John the Baptist in his favour.

PARAPHRASE.

John X. 28, I give unto all my sincere followers eternal life, which no one is able to deprive them of. 29. My Father, who has given me this power, and to whose providence I ascribe all the success of my doctrine, is greater than all, and no one is able to frustrate his designs. 30. And in this respect I and my Father are to be considered as one and the same, since what I do is by power communicated to me from him.

31. Upon this the Jews again took up stones to stone him. 32. Jesus said unto them, many useful miraculous works have I shewed you from my Father, for which

of

of them is it that you are now about to ſtone me? 33. They replied, It is not for any good work that we ſtone thee, but for a crime no leſs atrocious than blaſphemy; becauſe thou, who art but a man, haſt the aſſurance to arrogate to thyſelf all the power of God, and therefore in fact makeſt thyſelf to be a god. 34. Jeſus anſwered, If I had uſed the very language which you now aſcribe to me, it would not be without example in the ſcriptures. For do you not read in Pſalm LXXII, 6. *I ſaid ye are gods*, ſpeaking of magiſtrates only. 35. If then, in the language of the ſcriptures, they are called gods who only act by commiſſion from God (and ſurely the language of the ſcriptures is not to be arraigned.) 36. With what pretence can you ſay of him who comes into the world with a more immediate and extraordinary commiſſion from God than any prophet before him, thou blaſphemeſt, when all that he ſays amounts to no more than calling himſelf *the Son of God*, and claiming ſuch a power as you might expect that a ſon might receive from a father. 37. And that I am in this ſenſe the Son of God, I appeal to the works which he has empowered me to do. Theſe prove to demonſtration that what I do is by the power of God himſelf; 38. And therefore that what I ſaid before is true, viz. that I and he are one, or in other words, it is as if my Father was in me, and I in him; ſo intimate is the communication that ſubſiſts between us.

SECTION LXII.

Concerning Divorces. Children brought to Jesus. His Observations concerning Riches.

Matt. XIX. 1.——30. Mark X. 1.——31 Luke XVI. 18. XVIII. 15.——30.

JESUS had retired from Jeruſalem becauſe the Jews had made repeated attempts to take his life. However, he ſeems, after the feaſt of Tabernacles, not to have returned into Galilee, at leaſt not to have ſpent much time there, and therefore he had retired to the neighbourhood of the river Jordan, where we are informed that he had many diſciples, in conſequence of the people of that country having heard much of the preaching of John the Baptiſt, and being ſatisfied that what he had foretold concerning Jeſus was true.

3. There was great difference of opinion among the Jewiſh doctors on the ſubject of *divorces*, ſome maintaining that nothing but adultery would juſtify them, but others, and the generality, that they were lawful for any cauſe of diſlike. The queſtion was now put to Jeſus, probably with a view to bring on him the odium of one or other of theſe parties.

6. The books of Moſes contain the civil law of the Jews, and therefore arguing from them was very proper in this caſe, even without conſidering marriage as any thing elſe than a civil contract.

Matt.

8 *For the hardness of your hearts*;] For the perverſneſs of your tempers, knowing that without ſome liberty of divorce, the caſe of the wife would ſometimes be intolerable.

13. In all caſes where impoſition of hands is mentioned, it was only as an action which in thoſe countries accompanied prayer for any particular perſon.

15. We ſee here the affectionate temper of Jeſus, in not only praying for theſe little children, but alſo *taking them up in his arms*, as Mark ſays, and *putting his hands on them*, when he did it. A perſon of a very auſtere character would have contented himſelf with praying for theſe children, without taking them up in his arms. The action ſhews an affectionate love of children, and we may add a pleaſant and amiable temper.

17. This epithet of *good* was perhaps indiſcriminately applied to thoſe who were maſters, or doctors of the law; and Jeſus might chuſe to check that practice. His referring all goodneſs to God, as the ſource of it, is of a piece with his diſclaiming all extraordinary power as originating with himſelf, and refering it to God only. Jeſus uſing this language is the ſtrongeſt proof not only that he is not God, but that he was ſenſible of his imperfections as a man. For all created beings muſt be imperfect.

21. This command, which Jeſus had before given to ſeveral other perſons, and eſpecially to his apoſtles, might ſerve to ſhew this young man that there was ſomething that he valued more than his duty, if he conſidered Jeſus as ſpeaking from God. It alſo ſhews the dangerous influence of riches in general. By this young

man's going away *ſorrowful*, it is evident that he had ſome ſtruggle with himſelf, which could only have ariſen from reſpecting Jeſus as a prophet at leaſt. For otherwiſe ſuch a command could not have affected him at all. He would have treated it with deriſion. I would farther obſerve that this command to ſell all, even in this particular caſe, was not abſolute, but propoſed as a mark of perfection, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt.*

Sell that thou haſt, and give unto the poor.] This our Lord might ſay for the ſake of trying him, and ſeeing what he was willing to do and ſuffer for the ſake of the goſpel. Beſides, this was actually done by the primitive chriſtians, and was neceſſary in the circumſtances in which the chriſtian church was formed.

25. No wonder that they were amazed, for riches and power were at that time the great object of the apoſtles themſelves, they expecting that Jeſus would be a king, and that they were to be his chief miniſters.

27. This ſhews that the apoſtles, probably all of them, had been perſons of ſome property. Otherwiſe this boaſting would have been quite impertinent; and I have obſerved before that there are evident traces of ſeveral of them being conſiderably above the loweſt rank of life.

28. *Ye who have followed me ſhall, in the regeneration, when the ſon of man cometh, ſit upon twelve thrones*, &c. O.

Mark X. 25. This verſe in Beza's copy, comes after v. 23, which leads naturally to v. 24. It is likewiſe

confirmed

confirmed by Matt. xix, 24, and Luke xviii, 25. *Markland.*

30. Dr. Owen and Bishop Pearce consider the clause *houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands, with precautions*, as an interpolation, not being reconcileable to the truth of fact.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XIX. 11. &c. Jesus said unto them, What you propose, in order to avoid the inconveniencies attending the married state, when there happens not to be a thorough good liking between the parties, viz. not to marry at all, is more than can be expected of all persons, though it is so with respect to some. For some have little or no inclination to marriage, and therefore may be said, in a figurative sense, to be eunuchs from their mother's womb, as others are actually eunuchs by the wanton cruelty of men; while others, like myself, will devote themselves to a single life, in order to be free from worldly incumbrances, and to devote themselves more entirely to the service of religion; which, tho' not generally advisable, may be expedient in time of persecution. In this case, let every person act as he shall find himself able to do, and as he shall judge to be best upon the whole.

14. Luke XVIII. 17. Do not forbid affectionate parents to bring their children to me, for such will be qualified by baptism to become members of my visible church, as your children are now members of the Jewish church by circumcision. And besides, of persons whose tempers, in many respects, resemble that of a child

child, the ſubjects of my kingdom muſt entirely conſiſt. For whoſoever does not receive my inſtructions with a humble and teachable temper, free from prejudices and worldly views, which is characteriſtic of a child, cannot poſſibly receive it to good purpoſe.

17. Jeſus ſaid unto him, By your manner of addreſs you ſeem to conſider me as being *of myself* ſuperior to others in goodneſs; whereas every thing good is derived from God; ſo that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, he only is good; becauſe he alone is ſo of himſelf, originally, abſolutely, and in the higheſt degree.

26. Jeſus replied, Conſidering, indeed, the very powerful temptations to which rich men are expoſed, it may well appear impoſſible for them to reſiſt their fatal influence; but notwithſtanding this, ſuch is the power of the motives to virtue ſuggeſted in the goſpel, which God has ſent me to preach, that even this temptation will not be found too ſtrong: for numbers will abandon every thing for the ſake of the goſpel, and of a good conſcience.

30. Many who are firſt with reſpect to advantages, like the Jews, will be the laſt to improve them; and many who are laſt, as the Gentiles, *will diſtinguiſh* themſelves by an early and zealous attachment to the goſpel.

SEC-

SECTION LXIII.

The Parable of the Housholder who hired Labourers.

Matt. XX. 1.——16.

THE parable with which this chapter opens is a confirmation of what Jeſus advanced at the cloſe of the laſt, viz. *the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt.*

1. By this parable our Lord reproves the Jews, who ſhould be offended at the admiſſion of the Gentiles into the chriſtian church.

2. This was the uſual price of a day's labour in times of antiquity. It was eight pence of our money.

3. This third hour of the day was about nine in the morning with us.

16. Many ſhall be invited to partake of the bleſſings of the goſpel, but few, in compariſon of what might have been expected, will be found worthy of them. By this he might mean that the apoſtles and other early diſciples, who becauſe they were the firſt to embrace chriſtianity might on that ground think they had a juſt claim to be particularly diſtinguiſhed by Chriſt. They had boaſted that they had left all to follow him. And he might intend to apprize them that this circumſtance alone would not avail them, ſince chriſtians in a later period might have on the whole even more merit than they.

This

This may be an alluſion to the method of raiſing recruits in time of war, when all that were capable of bearing arms were *called* to appear, tho' but few of them were *ſelected* for the army.

Pearce thinks the words, *Many are called and few chosen*, an interpolation in this place, having been borrowed from chap. xxii, 14. where they are very proper.

The obvious meaning of this parable is, that we have no right to complain if we receive at the hands of God what by his promiſe we are intitled to (for we have no other title to any thing) tho' to appearance, others receeive more than in that proportion. For tho' in general all men will receive hereafter according to their works, and no perſon will receive *less* than he can reaſonably expect, others may receive in a much greater proportion. For this is analogous to the methods of divine providence in this world, and we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the divine proceedings in another will be regulated differently. We may think that the conduct of providence, will not be *myſterious* hereafter. But in this we may be miſtaken, tho' in a future world we ſhall certainly know more than we do in this. Still God, and his works, and providence, will always be incomprehenſible to finite minds:

Strictly ſpeaking there can be no ſuch thing as partiality in the divine proceedings. When God diſtinguiſhes one perſon more than another, we have reaſon to think that it is never *on his own account*, but always on that of *others*; it being conducive to the good of the whole that there ſhould be ſuch diſtinctions. In this, therefore, there is no proper *partiality* to any perſon.

God

God is the common parent of us all, and ſtands in an equal relation to us all.

This parable is far from giving any encouragement to a late repentance. For thoſe who were hired at the eleventh hour had been waiting all the day, but nobody hired them; ſo that they could not have done more than they did, in ſhewing their readineſs to be hired, and to labour. Beſides, one hour's work did remain, which cannot be ſaid to be the caſe of a proper death bed repentance, when all opportunity and capacity for labour is over.

SECTION LXIV.

The Reſurrection of Lazarus.

John XI. 1——57.

THE family of Lazarus, conſiſting of his ſiſters Martha and Mary, beſides Lazarus himſelf, was one to which Jeſus ſeems to have been particularly attached, no doubt on account of the excellence of their characters. From ſeveral circumſtances this family ſeems to have been of ſome conſideration. At this houſe an entertainment was made for Jeſus and his friends, when Martha was buſied in making preparations for it, while Mary attended to the diſcourſes of Jeſus. At another time this Mary anointed the head of Jeſus with a box of ointment, of ſo great value, as appeared exceedingly extravagant to Judas, and others who

who were preſent. When Lazarus died, he was buried as a perſon of ſome diſtinction, not in a common grave, but in a cave dug out of a rock. After the burial, many of the Jews from Jeruſalem were on a viſit to the family, to comfort them, ſome of whom ſeem to have had connections with the chief prieſts; and ſuch alſo were preſent at the entertainment, when the box of ointment was uſed.

2. Of this the evangeliſt gives an account in the next chapter.

3. Thinking, no doubt, that he would haſten to his relief.

4. i. e. Would not finally iſſue in death, but in his reſurrection.

10. By *day*, Jeſus might here mean that day, or ſeaſon, in which he was *to work the works of him that sent him.* When that ſhould be expired, but not before, he was to fall a ſacrifice to the malice of his enemies.

16. i. e. "If he will expoſe himſelf in this impru-"dent manner, ſtill we muſt not deſert him. Let us "run the ſame riſque, tho' we die along with him."

22. i. e. hoping he would raiſe him from the dead, but not preſuming to aſk ſo great a favour.

It is evident that the Jews in general, as well as the learned Phariſees, had a firm belief in the doctrine of a *resurrection*, which they did not learn from Jeſus. We find traces of it in the times of the Maccabees, long before our Saviour; and it is the belief of all the Jews to this day.

As it is highly improbable that a doctrine of ſo extraordinary a nature as this ſhould ever have occurred

to

to the mind of any man, and much leſs have been ſo firmly believed by a whole nation, we cannot help concluding that it had its origin in ſome revelation from God, tho' the record of it is now loſt. It was probably prior to the time of Moſes, and may have been as old as Adam, or at leaſt as Enoch, whoſe being tranſlated without dying would impreſs the minds of men with the perſuaſion of the reality of a future life, and a life, it muſt be obſerved, not of *the ſoul*, but of *the body*, or of *the man*. Such alſo would be the natural inference from the ſubſequent tranſlation of Elijah. Alſo, when Samuel appeared to Saul, it was not the ſoul of Samuel, but Samuel himſelf, riſing from his grave, under ground.

From theſe conſiderations it may appear poſſible that David might refer to a future life in ſome of thoſe paſſages in the Pſalms in which we ſhould not otherwiſe have expected ſuch a reference.

If ſo important a revelation as this had been made to Moſes, or at any time poſterior to him, we ſhould certainly have known *when*, and *by whom*, it was communicated. It muſt, however, be acknowledged to be ſomething extraordinary, that we ſhould find ſo little on this ſubject in the Old Teſtament. The minds of the beſt of the Jews were but carnal; and in the Meſſiah himſelf they expected nothing but a temporal prince, the virtuous as well as the vicious among them.

24, &c. N. B. *The reſurrection at the laſt day* is the object which Martha brings into view; our Lord's reply is relative to the ſame object—I am he who ſhall raiſe the dead, and beſtow life upon them at that day—

then

then, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live: and every one who is living (πας ὁ ζων) and believeth in me ſhall never die. This is juſt the ſame doctrine as that which St. Paul lays down, 1 Cor. xv. 51. *Behold I ſhew you a myſtery*; or a doctrine newly promulgated by the goſpel, we ſhall not all ſleep, *but we ſhall all be changed*, &c. Jeſus adds—believeſt thou this? Martha, as though ſurprized with a ſudden view of the grand object preſented before her, which ſhe could but imperfectly comprehend, replies only in general terms; Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world—conſequently—that all thy declarations are true, and thy promiſes faithful. T.

26. i. e. They who ſhall be dead at the ſecond coming of Chriſt ſhall riſe again, and they who ſhall be living at that time will be changed, and made incorruptible and immortal without dying. This promiſe of our Saviour, however is only made to believers, or good men. That the wicked will be made immortal in a future ſtate we are not told.

35. Jeſus probably wept from mere ſympathy, with the grief of all about him, which is an argument of the amiable ſenſibility of his mind.

38. The Jews of better faſhion generally diſpoſed of their dead in caves, ſcooped out of the natural rock, where, after they were bound up with ſpices in linen cloths, they were ſhut up with ſtones. *Shaw's Travels* p. 265.

42. This implies, if not a particular prayer for divine aſſiſtance every time that he worked any miracle,

racle, at leaſt an habitual confidence in the divine aid, which is equivalent to it. It equally implies that he worked his miracles not by any power properly *inherent in himself*, tho' originally derived from God, but by a power foreign to himſelf; agreeing with what he ſays, that *the Father within him did the works.* Now tho' there be a ſenſe in which it may be truly ſaid that *God works all our works in us and for us*, ſince we derive all our powers from him, yet if any of us ſhould ſay, when we only walk or ſpeak, or perform any other natural action, that it was not *ourſelves* that did it, but *God*; the language would be very improper, and reprehenſible, implying more than was really true. It is evident, therefore, from the whole tenor of the language and conduct of Jeſus, that the power by which he worked his miracles was no more *his own* than the power by which Moſes or the apoſtles worked miracles was their's, tho' the exertion of that power in ſome caſes ſeems to have been voluntary, or to have depended upon his will, which was not the caſe with any other prophet.

44. The greater quantity of ſpices there was uſed in the Jewiſh interments, the greater honour was thought to be done to the dead. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 163.

This was the third miracle of this ſtupendous nature, and the evidence of it is more indiſputable than that of either of the preceding, many of the enemies of Jeſus being preſent, and particularly attentive to his conduct.

46. This is not the only occaſion on which the Jews reſiſted the evidence of the moſt undeniable miracles. But they wanted more miracles, and of a different kind, to convince them that he was *the Meſſiah*.

49. It is conjectured that John wrote υμεις ουκ οιδατε ουδε λογιζεσθε, Do ye not know and conſider! See *Pearce*.

PARAPHRASE.

John XI. 9. I am under no apprehenſion of what you fear from the Jews. As men travel in ſafety in the light of the ſun, and ſtumble only when they walk in the night, ſo I, who am guided by a light ſuperior to that of the ſun, while I am about my Father's buſineſs, am under his conſtant protection, and therefore am without any fear for my perſonal ſafety.

16. Then ſaid Thomas to his fellow diſciples, Since he is determined to go, though at the apparent hazard of being killed by the Jews, let us by all means accompany him, and ſhare his fate, though it ſhould be death itſelf.

25. Jeſus ſaid unto her, It is by me that the general reſurrection ſhall be accompliſhed, and a new and better life introduced. At the laſt day all my deceaſed followers ſhall riſe, and thoſe of them who ſhall be alive at the laſt day ſhall not die at all, but undergo ſuch a change as that their bodies may be ſimilar to thoſe that riſe again; and, from being corruptible, ſhall become incorruptible and immortal. 27. She replied, I have

have no doubt of what thou ſayeſt, for I firmly believe that thou art the promiſed Meſſiah.

50. Caiaphas ſaid, It is certainly better for us to deſtroy this one man at once, than run the riſk of bringing the whole vengeance and power of the Romans upon us, in order to cruſh the ſeditions that will be excited by him, which might be the utter ruin of the whole nation. 51. Now Caiaphas, being the high prieſt that year, his words may be conſidered as prophetical, and in a much more important ſenſe than he had any idea of. For in fact, Jeſus did die for the whole nation, and not for that nation only, but for the benefit of the whole world, who by becoming chriſtians are united under one head, and brought to join in the worſhip of the one living and true God.

SECTION LXV.

Jeſus on his way to Jeruſalem foretells his ſufferings, cures two blind men, and is entertained by Zaccheus.

Matt. XX. 17——34. Mark X. 32——52. Luke XVIII. 31——43. XIX. 1——10.

WE are now drawing near to the moſt intereſting part of the hiſtory of Jeſus, viz. the tranſactions of the laſt paſſover, at which he was crucified. Of theſe, as might be expected, we have a more diſtinct account than of any of the preceding tranſactions of his life, and we ſhall find his mind properly affected with the clear knowledge that he had of his approach-

ing ſufferings. From this time all his diſcourſes to his diſciples had a view to them, and to their ſituation in conſequence of them. For excepting during the agony in the garden, he ſeems to have felt more for them, than for himſelf.

19. There was ſomething very improbable at the time in this prophecy of Jeſus concerning the manner of his death. The greateſt probability was, that if he had been to die a violent death, it would have been in the Jewiſh manner, by *ſtoning*, as a *blaſphemer*, eſpecially if, as was ſeveral times attempted, it had been done in a ſudden tumult. But it was in the councils of God that he ſhould be put to death in the moſt open and public manner, probably that being long expoſed to the view of all perſons, there might be the more witneſſes of the reality of his death; and this was moſt effectually done by the Roman method of public *crucifixion*.

21. This is ſaid to allude to the two moſt honourable places in the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, viz. on the right hand, and on the left of the preſident.

It ſeems extraordinary that, immediately after Jeſus had ſpoken ſo very expreſsly of his *death*, and the manner of it, a requeſt of this kind ſhould be made to him. But the apoſtles were ſo fully perſuaded that their maſter was to be a *king*, inveſted with ſupreme power, eſpecially as he had juſt before ſpoken of the twelve apoſtles as to ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael, that they concluded he ſpake figuratively; and the nearer he was to thoſe trials which they ſuppoſed to be ſignified by his *death*, the nearer they would

would naturally imagine he was to that *kingdom*, which was to follow thoſe trials.

The two ſons of Zebedee, James and John, had always been particularly diſtinguiſhed by Jeſus, but not more than Peter; thoſe three only having been with Jeſus when he raiſed the daughter of Jairus, on the mount of transfiguration, and afterwards in the garden of Gethſemane. They might think that, being two of the ſame family, they would ſtand higher in the eſteem of their maſter on that account, tho' the ſame was the caſe of Peter and Andrew. It is plain, however, that theſe ſons of Zebedee did not conclude from what Jeſus had ſaid of Peter *having the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, that any particular prerogative was intended by it; for then they would have conſidered the dignity for which they petitioned as already promiſed to another.

22. The word βαπτιζω often ſignifies to overwhelm with calamity. Thus Joſephus ſpeaking of a gang of robbers who forced their way into Jeruſalem, ſays εβαπτισαν την πολιν, *they baptized the city*.

23. James was the firſt of the apoſtles who ſuffered any conſiderable hardſhip, being put to death by Herod. John outlived all the apoſtles, but his ſufferings might not be the leſs, but perhaps the more, on that account, tho' he might die, as is ſuppoſed, a natural death.

28 *Give his life a ranſom for many.*] i. e. ſhall *deliver*, or *reſcue*, many, viz. from ſin and miſery by means of his goſpel, which was ſignally confirmed by his death and reſurrection. Thus God is ſaid to *redeem*, or *ranſom*, the Iſraelites from Egypt, by an exertion of his power, not by giving a price for them.

This was very pertinently obſerved, in order to give the apoſtles juſt ideas of the nature of that honour, which himſelf and his moſt diſtinguiſhed followers would obtain. It would conſiſt not in perſonal gratification, but in having a ſphere of greater uſefulneſs, which is properly expreſſed by being *the ſervant of all*; and indeed ſuch is the nature of all lawful and deſireable advancement. They are ſtations of public uſefulneſs, in which men give their time, and employ their talents, for the good of others; and what is that but being *ſervants*. Such, in fact, are kings, and all magiſtrates; officers who receive ſalaries for public ſervices; but being ſervices for which all perſons are not qualified, the idea of greater dignity and honour is neceſſarily, and properly annexed to them.

29. This tranſaction, which is placed by Matthew after the departure of Jeſus from Jericho, is related by Mark and Luke as happening at his approach to it. The difference is inconſiderable, and Matthew who was preſent is certainly the moſt worthy of credit.

31. The perſuaſion that Jeſus was the Meſſiah was probably by this time become general among the Jews, as we ſee by the impatience of the multitude to make him a king on his entering into Jeruſalem, and *Son of David* was ſynonymous to *Meſſiah*.

34. This is the laſt miracle that we have any account of Jeſus performing, except that relating to the barren fig-tree, and that of his healing the ear of the high prieſt's ſervant which had been cut off by Peter, and it was of the ſame benevolent nature with the generality of his miracles. You will alſo obſerve that it is not

only

only ſaid that he reſtored theſe perſons to their ſight, but that he *had compaſſion upon them*, and *touched their eyes*, which are indications of a ſympathiſing and feeling heart.

Luke XIX. 1. This was on Jeſus's laſt journey to Jeruſalem.

4. Sycamore trees are ſtill very common in Paleſtine.

7. They conclude that he was a ſinner, or a man of no principle, merely becauſe he was a publican.

8. In anſwer to theſe Jews, Zaccheus makes this declaration concerning his general principles and conduct, ſhewing that he was not the man that from his profeſſion they took him to be. For we are not to ſuppoſe that Zaccheus was here only profeſſing what he would do *hereafter*, and therefore imagine that this is an argument for the poſſibility of *ſudden converſions*. Characters, and habits, which form characters, are not ſo ſoon changed.

The Jews, on the voluntary acknowledgment of a fraud, were only obliged to add a *fifth part*. They were to reſtore *fourfold* when they had made no diſcovery, but were convicted of the injuſtice.

9. *Jeſus ſaid unto him.*] This may perhaps be rendered *concerning* him. See Macknight.

By a *Son of Abraham* Jeſus here means a proper member of the Meſſiah's kingdom, one who is intitled to the privileges of it. From Jeſus ſaying that ſalvation was to come to Zaccheus *this day*, it bable that the diſciples concluded he would aſſume his kingly character, as you will r

By *Son of Abraham* he does not mean a mere descendant of Abraham, but a worthy son of his. That Zaccheus was a Jew, his name evinces. Had he been a Gentile, it is probable that the Jews would have made still more objection to Jesus being entertained by him.

SECTION LXVI.

The Parable of the ten Pounds, and Jesus's Lamentation over Jerusalem.

Luke XIX, 11——44.

IN the preceding part of this chapter Jesus had said, when he was entertained at the house of Zaccheus, *this day is salvation come to this house.* From this circumstance probably, and also from his having said a little time before, that his twelve apostles would sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, they would naturally enough, considering the idea they had of their master, and his kingdom, be led to expect that he would soon assume kingly power, perhaps at the approaching passover, to confound all his enemies, and aggrandize his friends. It was with a view to this state of the minds of his disciples that Jesus delivered the parables I am going to read to you.

We shall also find that, on this last visit to Jerusalem, Jesus took every opportunity of delivering the most solemn and awful warnings to the Jews, and foretelling, both in parables, and without a parable the

judg-

judgments that would befal them in conſequence of their unbelief. This parable is one of them, tho' it might likewiſe be intended to ſignify to his diſciples, who expected the immediate diſplay of his royal dignity, and their own approaching diſtinction and happineſs, that the bleſſings of his kingdom were not to be obtained ſo eaſily, but only in conſequence of a careful improvement of the talents with which they were entruſted.

12. *To receive for himſelf a kingdom.*] This is an alluſion to the practice of the kings of Judea, and of the neighbouring countries, to go to Rome to obtain from the emperors the confirmation of their right to the throne, and to engage their protection.

13. Each of theſe pounds was ſeven or eight of our money.

15. If by Jeſus *going away*, and then *receiving his kingdom*, we are to underſtand his going to his Father, and then his returning with power and great glory to raiſe the dead, and to give to every man according to his works, we may learn from this parable, that the happineſs of heaven is not a ſtate of mere enjoyment, without farther exerciſe or diſcipline, but a ſtate of great exertion, like that of the government of a city, or a province. We ſhall then have more important, but more honourable work to do, and therefore may be ſaid to be in a ſtate of diſcipline and improvement, as long as we continue to exiſt. So that it is only in a popular and general ſenſe that our ſtate of trial is ſaid to terminate with the preſent life; the ſtation we immediately enter upon in the next depending upon it.

23. Thus, without any exertion of his own, the money that had been entruſted with him would have received *ſome* increaſe; and as he knew the ſeverity of his maſter, he had no excuſe for not doing this. We ſee in this inſtance what miſerable excuſes men are ready to make for their neglect of duty. They are firſt governed by their paſſions, or by their indolence, and let them be ever ſo much to blame, they will always, like Adam and Eve in paradiſe, find ſomething to plead in their own excuſe. This we ſee to be the caſe with the moſt abandoned of men. By ſome means or other they often ſucceed in pacifying their own minds, and as the prophet ſays, cry *peace, peace to themſelves, when there is no peace.* What we ſee to be the caſe with others, we ſhould always ſuſpect concerning ourſelves. The ſame bias in our own favour, will always dictate the ſame idle excuſes, which being common to all men, will avail us nothing at the laſt day.

26. They who have ſhewn the greateſt capacity, and the beſt diſpoſition to improve what has been committed to them, are the moſt proper perſons to receive more. But it is ſtill as a farther *truſt*, which they are to improve, and not merely as a reward for paſt ſervices; an opportunity of ſtill greater exertion, and a ſphere of higher duty; as no doubt will be what is called the happineſs of a heavenly ſtate.

27. By *ſervants*, we are to underſtand the profeſſed diſciples of Chriſt, and by his *enemies*, thoſe who openly reject him, as the Jews of that generation.

41. This circumſtance ſhews in a moſt ſtriking light the ſenſibility of the mind of Jeſus, his feeling and affectionate

fectionate diſpoſition. He was not content with forwarning his countrymen of their certain ruin, if they ſhould continue in their courſe of diſobedience to God and his prophets, but he was moved even to ſhed tears on the view of the approaching miſeries of his enemies. So far was he from indulging a ſpirit of revenge, that he expreſſes the ſtrongeſt regret that they had not been more wiſe for themſelves, and that his good will to them could avail them nothing.

44. At the time that this prophecy was delivered it was no more probable that the city of Jeruſalem would be ſubject to theſe dreadful calamities which Jeſus here predicts, than any other city in the Roman empire. Yet he not only foretels the certain deſtruction of it, but the very manner in which it would be accompliſhed, their enemies *casting a trench about it, and compassing it on every side*, to prevent all ingreſs or egreſs, which was actually effected by a wall of circumvallation, in the courſe of the ſiege by Titus.

The phraſe *to know*, frequently ſignifies to regard, to pay proper attention to.

SEC.

SECTION LXVII.

Jesus sups at Bethany, and makes a triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Matt. XXVI. 6——13. XXI. 1——11. Mark XIV 1——9. XI. 1——10. Luke XIX. 29——40. John XII. 1——19.

AS we are come nearer to the last scenes of the life of Jesus, his history becomes much more interesting than before, and we are now within a few days of his death, when he was at Jerusalem for the last time. About this time, for the reasons that have been given, and especially on the account of the recent raising of Lazarus from the dead, in so public a manner, and so near to Jerusalem, the expectations of the common people were raised to the highest pitch; and the first reception of Jesus by the populace, who did not enter into the views of their superiors the Scribes and Pharisees, corresponded to these high expectations.

John XII 1. This was on the sabbath day, when it was customary with the Jews to make entertainments.

2. By Martha's serving, it should seem that this entertainment was at her own house, or at least that it was made at her expence, it being usual for the master or mistress of the house to wait upon the guests; as Abraham and Sarah are said to have done, when they entertained the angels without knowing them to be such. But Matthew and Mark say that this entertainment

ment was at the houſe of Simon the leper, probably one who had been a leper, but was cured by Jeſus.

3. In Matthew and Luke this ointment is ſaid to have been contained in an *alabaster box*, by which was meant a veſſel without a handle ſuch as was uſed for holding ſmall quantities of very valuable things. It was great reſpect to anoint the head with ointment of ſuch value, but to anoint the feet with it, was a mark of the greateſt poſſible reſpect and veneration. Theſe ſentiments would, no doubt, be much heightened in the mind of Mary, by Jeſus having ſo lately raiſed from the dead her brother Lazarus, who was preſent at the entertainment.

5. The ſum here mentioned is near ten pounds of our money.

6. *Bear that which was therein.*] Ἐβάσταζεν, which may be rendered *carried off*, or *ſtole* what was in it.

Matthew XXVI. 7. *Alabaster* was a ſubſtance of which boxes were ſo commonly made for ointments, &c. that they retained the ſame name when they were made of gold, ſilver, glaſs, or wood. Pearce. *Breaking* means nothing more than *opening it*, or only *ſhaking it*, to mix the parts well together. That ſhe did not pour the whole contents on our Lord's head, is evident from her reſerving a part for his feet.

Not that ſhe had any view to his death; but Jeſus himſelf, knowing how ſoon he was to die, choſe in this manner to allude to it, tho' it was impoſſible for any of his audience to underſtand him at the time, which I have more than once obſerved to have been his cuſtom

on

on other occaſions. His meaning ſeems to have been, that this ointment which Mary might be ſuppoſed to have prepared for his dead body, was applied to him while he was alive, and only near to his death.

John XII 9. There was probably a great croud about the houſe, as well as a conſiderable number of gueſts. It was indeed ſufficient to excite curioſity, to ſee at the ſame time a man who had been raiſed from the dead, and him who had raiſed him.

11. By *believing on Jesus* muſt here be underſtood believing him to be the Meſſiah, as appeared when he entered the city. Nothing perhaps can ſhew the incorrigible prejudice and malice of the Jewiſh rulers in a ſtronger light than their attempting to put to death Lazarus, as well as Jeſus. Indeed, their folly was as great as their malice. For believing, as they did, the power of Jeſus to raiſe a man from the dead, what could they expect but to afford him another opportunity of triumphing over them. But extreme malice often makes men blind to the moſt obvious conſequences of things, and as we ſay infatuated.

12. This was Sunday, from the following circumcances afterwards called *Palm Sunday*.

Matt. XXI. 2. This exact knowledge of things at a diſtance, with reſpect to time and place, which Jeſus ſhewed upon this occaſion, and likewiſe afterwards, with reſpect to the perſon with whom he intended to eat the paſſover, was well calculated to ſatisfy his diſciples, when they came to reflect upon it, that nothing could befal him but what he foreſaw, and was prepared for.

The

The Jews were not allowed to uſe horſes. For in the Eaſt they are chiefly articles of luxury, being only uſed for pomp, and for war, and never as beaſts of burden, or draught. The aſs alſo is a much finer animal in the Eaſt than it is in this part of the world. We read of Judges and princes riding upon them. When Solomon was crowned, and made a ſolemn entry into Jeruſalem, he was ſeated on an aſs.

4. The paſſage alluded to is Zech. ix. 5. which Grotius ſays is allowed by ſome Jewiſh Rabbi's to relate to the Meſſiah.

9. The expreſſion of the moſt profound reverence in the Eaſt is to fall down and kiſs the feet of a perſon, or the hem of his garment. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 38.

Mark XI. 10. *That cometh in the name of the Lord.*] Theſe words are not found in ſeveral MSS. Pearce thinks them to be an interpolation. He that cometh (ο ερχομενος) ſeems to have been an appellative of the Meſſiah. Thus when John ſent to inquire if Jeſus was the Meſſiah, he bid his diſciples to ſay, *Art thou he that ſhould come?*

It is evident from theſe acclamations that the generality of the common people conſidered Jeſus as the Meſſiah, who they thought was to be a deſcendant of David, or, in their phraſeology, *a Son of David.*

John XII. 19. From this time the rage of the Phariſees was raiſed to the higheſt pitch. Jeſus had kept no meaſures with them, and now he took no meaſure to guard himſelf againſt them. It was evident, therefore, that there muſt be an end of his authority, or theirs.

Can

Can we wonder, then, at the deſperate part they took, or at the violence and infatuation with which they conducted themſelves in it.

A PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XXVI. 12, Mark xiv. 8. John xii, 7. By reſerving ſuch a quantity of valuable ointment for this occaſion, ſhe has, in fact, reſerved it for my funeral. It is like the laſt kind office to a departing friend, where no return is expected; and in this light I ſhall conſider it.

SECTION LXVIII.

Jeſus clears the Temple, and curſes the barren Fig-tree.

Matthew XXI. 12.——21. Mark XI. 11.——26. Luke XIX. 45, 46. John XII. 14.——22.

JESUS is now arrived at Jeruſalem, to that feaſt of paſſover at which he was put to death. He had ſpent ſome time in the country beyond Jordan, and in the deſert, or leſs populous part, of Judea, on account of the Jews having ſought his life. His journey to Jeruſalem at this time drew particular attention, in conſequence perhaps of his having dropped ſome expreſſions which were thought to intimate that he would ſoon aſſume a regal character. Indeed, having now no farther

farther meaſures to obſerve with reſpect to the Jewiſh rulers, he aſſumed more authority, and more outward marks of dignity, than he had ever done before.

His commendation of Mary for anointing him with ſo great a quantity of valuable ointment, probably in the preſence of a large company of perſons of conſequence, was a tacit acknowledgment of his claim to a very high character. But his triumphant entry into Jeruſalem, amidſt the acclamations of the populace who ſaluted him with the titles appropriated to the Meſſiah, was in fact openly aſſuming that character. The reaſon of the common people crowding after him in this manner was, no doubt, their expectation of his being that prince whom they had ſo long expected; and their diſappointment in this expectation from him may help us, in ſome meaſure, to account for their inveteracy againſt him a few days afterwards; when they preferred Barabbas to him, and were clamorous for his crucifixion, ſuppoſing ſome of them to be the ſame perſons, tho' as we ſhall ſee, it is very poſſible that they were not,

12. This cleanſing of the temple was an act of great boldneſs, and openly ſetting at defiance all the power of the ſtate, which had connived at ſo great an abuſe. This was done at the height of Jeſus's popularity, the common people attending him every where, and diſpoſed to favour him in every thing that he ſhould undertake, in ſuch a ſuch a manner as diſcouraged the Jewiſh rulers from oppoſing him.

For the convenience of thoſe who came from a diſtance, and who could not bring along with them their

lambs for the paſſover, and other beaſts for ſacrifices; the outer court of the temple had long been uſed for the purpoſe of buying and ſelling victims, and perhaps as abuſes are apt to increaſe, for other purpoſes of traffic, and the general buſineſs of exchange, thoſe who came at a diſtance from Judea bringing the coins of their reſpective countries, and there exchanging them for ſuch as were current in that country.

Joſephus ſays that no leſs than 256,500 lambs were offered at the paſſover.

16. *Perfected praiſe.*] The ſeventy have the words here quoted, but in the Hebrew it is *ordained ſtrength.*

This was virtually acknowledging that he was the Meſſiah.

John II. 18. i. e. "What ſign ſheweſt thou that thou "art the Meſſiah, ſeeing thou doſt things that are pe-"culiar to that character."

It may ſeem extraordinary that our Lord's enemies ſhould have had a ſuſpicion of his intended reſurrection, and yet his diſciples have no idea of it at all. But their notions of his dignity and approaching kingdom might make them have the greateſt difficulty in conceiving that he ſhould ever ſuffer death; and conſequently as he often ſpake very figuratively, they would be moſt apt to put ſome figurative conſtruction on all that he ſaid about a reſurrection.

22. This is a remarkable inſtance of Jeſus ſometimes chuſing to ſpeak in a figurative and enigmatical manner, ſuch as he knew would not be underſtood at the time. Being then in the temple, his hearers would naturally

naturally think that he meant the building in which they were.

Matt. X XI. 17. His lodging out of the city might be on account of the vaſt crouds which were then in it, and alſo to avoid any tumultuous attacks upon him by the contrivance of his enemies.

18. Having left the houſe where he lodged early, before he had taken any refreſhment.

19 This was probably a fig tree on the public road, and therefore no particular perſon's property; and as Jeſus choſe to ſpeak by parables and ſymbols, he took this opportunity to ſhew in the caſe of a fig tree, what would be the fate of the Jewiſh nation in general, in conſequence of their unfruitfulneſs in a moral reſpect.

21. It does not appear that the diſciples underſtood the true meaning of this miracle. They were only ſtruck with the *greatness* of it.

Mark XI. 12. *The time of figs was not yet,*] i. e. the time of gathering figs. According to Dr. Shaw (*Travels*, p. 342 (the time of gathering figs in the Eaſt is the middle or latter end of June, but that it frequently happens in Barbary, and no doubt in a hotter climate, that, according to the quality of the preceding ſeaſon, ſome of the more forward and vigorous will now and then yield a few ripe figs ſix weeks or more before the full ſeaſon. It is well known, he adds, that the fruit of theſe prolific trees always precedes the leaves, and conſequently when our Saviour ſaw one of them in full vigour, *having leaves*, he might according to the common courſe of nature, very juſtly look for fruit, and *haply find some*; if not ſome *winter figs* upon it likewiſe.

wiſe. For thoſe figs which are ripe in Auguſt often hang on the trees all winter, and are gathered as a delicious morſel in the ſpring.

This miracle of the blaſting of the barren fig tree was awfully prophetic of the calamities of the Jewiſh nation for their infidelity and other ſins.

13. Theophraſtes, as explained by Pliny, ſays of the Egyptian fig trees, that the laſt years fruit being pulled about the beginning of the dog days, they preſently produce more; and that when the ſun riſes with Arcturus, they bloſſom again, the winter nouriſhing the fruit. This fruit the Jews called בכורת (*bicurah*) as in Hoſea ix, 10. *I found Iſrael like the grapes in the wilderness, as the firſt ripe on the fig tree.* C.

22. Have *a faith of God*, i. e. an exceeding ſtrong faith, as *a river of God* ſignifies a great river.

SECTION LXIX.

Some Greeks enquire concerning Jeſus. A voice from Heaven. Diſcourſe concerning his Miſſion.

John XII. 20——50.

FROM the time that Jeſus entered Jeruſalem at this laſt feaſt of paſſover, we find him almoſt continually in the temple, the place of moſt public reſort, where he diſcourſed as uſual, eſpecially concerning his divine miſſion, which we ſhall now find atteſted i a miraculous manner. And I have obſerved before, that

that of all the evangeliſts John gives the moſt particular account of the warnings that the Jews had of their approaching ruin on account of their rejection of Jeſus, and of the evidence they had of his divine miſſion; as he records many of his diſcourſes to this purpoſe, omitted by the other evangeliſts.

20. As theſe Greeks attended at the paſſover, it is poſſible that they might be proſelytes to the Jewiſh religion, tho' many perſons who were not entirely proſelytes, not being circumciſed, but who had a reſpect for the Jewiſh religion, and were worſhippers of the true God, attended the ſervice of the temple in the exterior court. Indeed, idolatrous princes ſometimes choſe to offer ſacrifices, or had them offered in their name at the temple; and ſuch offerings were not rejected by the Jews.

As theſe Greeks were acquainted with Philip, who was of Bethſaida, which bordered upon Syrophænicia, it is probable that they were of that country, as well as the woman whoſe daughter Jeſus cured of madneſs.

27. It is no wonder that Jeſus, being a man, ſhould, on the near approach of his ſufferings, feel much anxiety and diſtreſs. Much muſt have paſſed in his own mind of which we have no account. Here we have the firſt intimation of his giving any ſymptom of it in public, and we ſee that his feelings on this occaſion were exactly ſimilar to thoſe which he had in what is called his *agony* in the garden. He earneſtly wiſhed (as what man would not) to be excuſed his dreadful ſufferings, and violent death; but at the ſame time he expreſſes his entire acquieſcence in the will of God, in

the plan of whoſe providence that event was abſolutely neceſſary to the greateſt and moſt benevolent purpoſes.

28. This is the third time that Jeſus was honoured in this remarkable manner by an audible voice from heaven, atteſting the divine approbation of him. The firſt time was at his baptiſm, and the ſecond at the mount of transfiguration.

29. Thoſe who did *not* diſtinguiſh the words, but only heard a loud noiſe, muſt have been thoſe who were at a diſtance; while thoſe who were near enough to diſtinguiſh the ſounds, ſaid that it was the voice of an angel. It was probably too loud to be that of a man.

31. By the *ruler of this world* Mr. W. in this place, and alſo Ch. xiv, 30, underſtands Chriſt himſelf. W.

34. The Jews to this day ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah will firſt reſcue their nation from their ſtate of captivity and ſervitude in other countries; that the reſurrection will then take place; that the Meſſiah will continue to live along with thoſe who will be raiſed from the dead, and that the age of man in general will from that time be equal to that of the antediluvians. Their authority for this is Iſ. LXV. 17. &c.

36. Probably retiring to Bethany, where he always paſſed the night, after which he appears conſtantly to have reſorted to the temple, where he continued the greateſt part of the day. Accordingly, when he was upon his trial before the high prieſt, who inquired concerning

cerning his doctrine, he ſaid that he had taught daily in the temple, in the moſt open manner.

37. Notwithſtanding theſe miracles, which clearly proved him to have a commiſſion from God, the Jews thought that he wanted two neceſſary characters of their Meſſiah. He had not the *ſign from heaven*, which they expected, and what was more, he aſſumed no marks of royalty, but peremptorily rejected all offers to make him a king.

38. The paſſage alluded to is Iſ. Liii. 1. in which the obſtinacy and infidelity of the Jews were clearly deſcribed, being foreſeen by God, and made ſubſervient to the purpoſes of his wiſe providence.

43. In times of perſecution there will be many perſons in this ſituation, not having courage to act conſiſtently with their principles. In thoſe times chriſtianity will have more friends than publicly appear to be ſo, as at other times it will have fewer; the ſame motive viz. a wiſh to be thought well of by perſons of faſhion and power, and even by the populace, then leading men to make a public profeſſion of chriſtianity, which in other circumſtances would lead them to act a contrary part. In neither caſe are they influenced by a love of truth, but by ſome worldly conſideration. It may be of uſe to us to aſk ourſelves ſeriouſly, what part *we* ſhould probably take in time of perſecution for conſcience ſake.

PARAPHRASE.

John XII. 23. Jeſus ſaid, The application of theſe Greeks to ſee me, ſuggeſts the joyful idea of all nations

becoming my diſciples, and partaking of the bleſſings of the goſpel. And now the time draws very near for that awful event, which is abſolutely neceſſary to all the great ends of my miniſtry; viz. my death and reſurrection, after which I ſhall be glorified. 24. But my death is as neceſſary to the converſion of the world to the belief of the goſpel, as the caſting of a ſeed into the ground is neceſſary to the multiplication of it. 25. And, alarming as it may ſeem, all my faithful followers muſt be as ready to meet death in the profeſſion of the faith of the goſpel as myſelf. In the caſe of perſecution he that loves his life, ſo as to deny his religion for the ſake of it, ſhall forfeit a life of infinitely more value than the preſent; but he who, from a conſcientious regard to his religious principles, is willing to ſuffer death rather than renounce them, ſhall receive in exchange for it eternal life hereafter. 26. Every perſon who profeſſes himſelf to be my ſervant muſt follow me wherever I go, though death ſhould be in the way. But it will be an ample recompence for this that my Father will honour and reward all my faithful followers, of whatever nation they may be.

31. Now is the time faſt approaching, when vengeance will be taken on all thoſe who reject me; ſince, after this voice from heaven, they have had all reaſonable evidence of my divine miſſion, and are not convinced by it. Soon will my triumph over all the powers of darkneſs, of ſin, and death, be complete. 32. For if I be raiſed upon the croſs, it will, in fact, be as a ſtandard, to which all mankind will, in due time, be drawn.

33. By

33. By being lifted up, he alluded to the manner of his death, viz. crucifixion.

34. The people anſwered, We learn in our prophetical books, that the reign of the Meſſiah is to laſt forever; how then can he be put to death? What ſon of man doeſt thou mean? We know of no Meſſiah ſo characteriſed.

35. Jeſus ſaid, do not now cavil at what I ſay, but improve the opportunity that yet remains of profiting by my advice, and the laſt warnings that I ſhall give you, that darkneſs and deſtruction may not overtake you: 36. Profit by the light which you now have, that, in conſequence of becoming truly enlightened and wiſe here, you may ſhine as the ſun in the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever and ever hereafter.

47. As to thoſe who do not believe on me, I am not now come to paſs ſentence upon, and puniſh them. My commiſſion at preſent is not to judge the world, but by my inſtructions, and faithful warnings, if it be poſſible, to ſave it.

50. Whatever I ſay is by commiſſion from my Father, and obedience to his will enſures eternal life and happineſs. I ſhall, therefore, at all events, perſiſt in executing my commiſſion, and in ſpeaking and doing whatever I have received in charge from him.

SEC.

SECTION LXX.

The Discourse concerning the Baptism of John. The Parable of the Man who had two Sons, and of the Housholder who planted a Vineyard.

Matt. XXI. 23.——46. Mark XI. 27.——33. XII. 1——12. Luke XIX. 47. 48. XX. 1.——19.

JESUS had now made what we may call his *triumphal entry* into Jeruſalem; and, in the height of his popularity among the people, had driven all the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, an act of power very unlike any thing that he had exerted before. Till this time he had carefully avoided doing any thing of a *civil nature*, or that could alarm the governing powers. This high act of authority would therefore naturally excite their attention, and produce the following inquiry concerning it.

24. Jeſus had already done enough to prove his divine miſſion to any impartial obſerver, and therefore upon this occaſion, he might juſtly decline giving a direct anſwer to a queſtion which was only intended to inſnare him. He therefore contents himſelf with ſhewing them how they might anſwer it for themſelves, and he took this opportunity of ſhewing the common people how ready his enemies were to ſay what was contrary to their real perſuation, when their intereſt, or reputation, would be endangered by an open avowal of the truth.

26. John

26. John appears to have been much more popular than Jeſus, which may be pretty eaſily accounted for. John announced to the Jews the near approach of a greater prophet than himſelf, which would naturally raiſe their expectations concerning their promiſed Meſſiah, and of courſe ſuch a Meſſiah as they wiſhed for. But Jeſus, tho' giving the moſt indiſputable evidence of his actually being the Meſſiah, appeared to be ſuch a Meſſiah as they did not wiſh for.

27. The authority by which John ſpake, and by which Jeſus acted, were the ſame, John having born teſtimony to him. If therefore the Jewiſh rulers could ſatisfy themſelves with reſpect to the one, they might alſo with reſpect to the other.

28. There is ſomething peculiarly awful in the prophetical meaning of the parables which our Lord delivered on this occaſion in the temple, all of them plainly enough foretelling the rejection and deſtruction of the Jews.

By this parable Jeſus ſhews that the condition of the Phariſees who were then diſcourſing with him, and endeavouring to inſnare him, was really more hopeleſs than that of perſons openly wicked.

32. i. e. What they eſteemed to be *righteouſneſs*, with all the outward rigour which they expected in a prophet.

33. Mr. Chardin found wine preſſes in Perſia, which were hollow places in the ground, lined with ſtone work. *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. I, p. 392. It is alſo cuſtomary in the Eaſt to have towers in gardens and vineyards. *Ibid*, Vol. II. p. 241.

This

This parable ſhews in the ſtrongeſt light the abſolute incorrigibleneſs of the Jewiſh nation in general, and of the Phariſees in particular, in conſequence of reſiſting every method which the Divine Being had taken to reclaim them, and the juſtice and awfulneſs of the judgments with which they would be overtaken.

34. In thoſe times it was uſual to pay rent in kind;

36 —— *Of more weight and dignity than the firſt.* Markland.

39. We ſee that the great object of the miſſion of Chriſt, here repreſented by *the ſon of the houſholder*, as diſtinguiſhed from the *ſervants*, was the very ſame with that of other prophets who had gone before him, viz. to bring men to repentance and good works, repreſented by *receiving the fruits of this vineyard*; and therefore it was not neceſſary that he ſhould be of a nature different from them. Accordingly when the dreſſers of the vineyard killed this ſon, his death is only conſidered as an act of more atrocious wickedneſs than that of beating or abuſing the ſervants, and had no farther aſpect with reſpect to them. We ſee nothing like the divinity of Chriſt, or the doctrine of atonement, in this parable, or indeed in any other of our Saviour's diſcourſes.

42 The paſſage alluded to is Pſalm cxviii. 22.

The head of the corner.] This does not mean the foundation ſtone, but the uppermoſt angular ſtone, which binds together all below it. See Pearce.

44. This is an alluſion to puniſhments uſed in the Eaſtern nations, of throwing criminals downfrom a tower

er upon ſtones, and alſo throwing ſtones from that eminence upon them.

46. It is not ſaid that they took him to be the Meſſiah. That character he had never openly aſſumed; but they might have been convinced that, tho' he ſhould not be the Meſſiah, he muſt at leaſt be a great prophet, becauſe no man could do the things which he did, if God had not been with him. Some of them, however, were ſo far blinded with their prejudices, as to aſcribe his miraculous works to the co-operation of Satan.

48 *Were very attentive to hear him.*] Literally *hung upon him to hear him*, a mode of expreſſion, ſignifying the moſt earneſt attention.

SECTION LXXI.

The parable of the Wedding Supper.

Matt. XXII. 1——14. Luke XIV. 16——24.

JESUS is ſtill inſtructing the people in the temple during the laſt feaſt of the paſſover.

2. It is the general cuſtom in the Eaſt not to carry away any part of the proviſion of an entertainment, but to call in the poor to eat it up. See *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. II. p. 126.

This parable, like many others, is calculated to juſtify the conduct of divine providence, in rejecting the Jews, and in admitting the Gentiles to thoſe privileges which they had deſpiſed. It very much reſembles that concerning the vineyard let out to huſbandmen.

12. Theſe

12. Theſe garments were furniſhed by the perſon who made the entertainment, ſo that refuſing to wear one was not an indication of poverty, but a mark of contempt.

13. *Outer darkneſs.*] The room in which the feaſt was kept may be ſuppoſed, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſt, to be ſplendidly illuminated, in compariſon with which the other room might be ſaid to be dark, whether it was abſolutely ſo or not.

14. *Many are called, but few chosen.*] i. e. Many profeſs the goſpel, but few, in compariſon, act agreably to it, ſo as to be finally acknowledged by Chriſt to belong to him.

Luke XIV. 23. It is common in the Eaſt for travellers who do not intend to make any ſtay in a place, to ſtop to refreſh themſelves under hedges; ſo that it does not follow from this circumſtance that the perſons here mentioned were extremely poor and helpleſs, ſo as to require no *preſſing* to come to an entertainment, which might detain them longer than they wiſhed in a place.

SECTION LXXII.

Jesus questioned by the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matt. XXII. 15——46. Mark XII. 13——37. Luke XX. 20——44.

THE rulers of the Jews were now determined to put Christ to death, and only wanted a pretence for doing it. The discourses that follow were not casual ones, but contrived on purpose to insnare him. The first object was to embroil Jesus with the Romans, and if that failed, to have some pretence for condemning him to death by the maxims of their own law, or at least to raise the prejudices of some part of the nation against him; and it is remarkable that we have here an example of attempts being made to insnare Jesus by all the great classes of men in the country.

16. The Herodians are generally supposed to be those who, like Herod the great, were attached to the Romans, and had no objection to live under their government. They were opposed to the more zealous Pharisees, who held that such subjection was unworthy of their nation, as *the peculiar people of God*, and ought to be resisted as *unlawful*. These Herodians and Pharisees, however, agreeing in their common prejudices against Jesus, came together, you observe, for the purpose of insnaring him.

21. This was no direct answer to their question, but it

it indirectly reproved both the parties. The one was taught that there were rights of civil power, which the Phariſees in a manner acknowledged by uſing the Roman money; and the Herodians were taught that they ought not to ſacrifice their religion to any civil governor.

28. As the original revelation of God concerning a reſurrection was loſt (for it is not to be found in the books of the Old Teſtament, and in our Saviour's time the Jews had no other ſacred books than thoſe which are come down to us) it is no wonder that the doctrine of a future ſtate ſhould in a courſe of time come to be miſunderſtood, and that with the *evidence* of it, the *effects* and *uſe* of it ſhould alſo be diminiſhed.

It is plain from this paſſage, that the Phariſees among the Jews entertained very imperfect notions of the reſurrection, ſince they had not been able to anſwer ſuch a queſtion as this. They had no idea of living in a future world, but in the manner in which they lived here. But this argument of our Saviour's evidently goes on the ſuppoſition of there being no intermediate ſtate: for, admitting this, God might, with the ſtricteſt propriety be ſaid to be the *God of thoſe patriarchs*, as they were then living and happy, though their bodies were in the grave. Whereas, on the ſuppoſition of their being without life or enjoyment at that time, his relation to them as *their God*, which was indiſſoluble, was a ſecurity to them for their future life and happineſs. There does not, however, ſeem to be much force in the argument, except with the Jews, to whom it was addreſſed, and who admitted ſimilar

con-

conſtructions of ſcripture. For though Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob had periſhed, the perſon, who ſpake to Moſes might make himſelf known to him, as he whom they had worſhipped.

35. What the lawyer meant does not clearly appear; but it is evident that the anſwer of Jeſus was ſo judicious, and forcible, that no handle could be made uſe of to his prejudice.

45. The paſſage alluded to is Pſalm cx. 1. As the Jews expected a temporal Meſſiah, or ſuch a king as David had been, they could not conceive wherein the ſuperiority of the kingdom of the Meſſiah conſiſted and therefore were not able to anſwer the queſtion.

The reference in the Pſalm is not to the Meſſiah, but to David or Solomon: but as the Jews had applied this, and other paſſages of the ſcriptures to the Meſſiah, the queſtion was a very fair one with reſpect to *them*, whatever Jeſus himſelf might think of it.

46. From this time they had recourſe to other methods to gain their wicked ends.

SECTION LXXIII.

Jeſus inveighs againſt the Phariſees. He obſerves the Widow's Mite.

Matt. XXIII. 1——39. Mark XII. 38.——44. Luke XXI. 1.——4. XX. 45——47.

THE emiſſaries from the Scribes and Phariſees, and other leading men among the Jews, having now left

Jeſus without having been able to gain their purpoſe by the inſnaring queſtions they put to him, there now remained with him only a mixed multitude, and his own particular diſciples. The minds of this company being, no doubt, thoroughly impreſſed with the baſeneſs and treachery of the eſtabliſhed guides of the people, Jeſus took this opportunity of addreſſing his audience, who had been witneſſes both of their treacherous deſigns, and their utter diſappointment, on the ſubject of the character and maxims of thoſe in whom they had been uſed to put ſo much confidence. And the time being now fully come when he was to bear the utmoſt effects of their malice, he is not ſparing of his juſt invectives, for which they had given him repeated provocation.

2. i. e. It was their buſineſs to teach and explain the laws of Moſes.

3. i. e. So long as they truly explain the ſenſe of Moſes.

5. *Phylacteries*;] ſcrolls of parchment, on which were written ſelect ſentences of the law, which the Jews wore on their foreheads and on their wriſts, in obedience as they imagined, to the precepts of Moſes, in Exodus xiii, 9, 16, Deut. vi, 8. xi, 18.

Borders of their garments;] the fringed borders which they were required to wear, Numbers xv, 28, &c.

7. The title of *Rabbi* had not at that time been long uſed by the Jews. Hiſtory ſhews that their learned men were very fond of it, and it was uſual out of greater reſpect, to repeat the titles in their addreſſes to them.

9. *Call*

9. *Call no man your father upon earth.*] It is remarkable, that, notwithſtanding this prohibition, this very title of *father* has been moſt of all affected by the profeſſors and teachers of religion; and certainly there is a ſenſe in which it may be uſed very innocently, as by Paul, *Ye have not many fathers, but I have begotten you in the goſpel*, &c.

11, 12. There is no ſentiment more frequently or more earneſtly repeated by Jeſus than this. We may therefore aſſure ourſelves that there is no virtue more properly chriſtian than this of *humility*, and a readineſs to conſult the honour and happineſs of other perſons. Our Saviour himſelf came *not to be adminiſtered to*, as a great king or prince, but to *miniſter*, as he ſays, and even to lay down his life for the good of others. Indeed the ſole object of the diſpenſations of God himſelf is the happineſs of his creatures. Should not this, then, be a great object with us. The ſureſt criterion of our advancing in real excellence and perfection of character, is our acquiring a diſpoſition to think leſs of ourſelves, and of our own happineſs, and more of that of others.

15. The pains taken by the Jews to make proſelytes was exceſſive, and is equalled by nothing but that of the Roman Catholics, and in itſelf conſidered, is certainly commendable. But then theſe converts in both caſes were taught to deſpiſe and to hate all thoſe with whom they had been formerly connected, looking upon them with abhorrence. The Jews called proſelytiſm being *born again*, and maintained that it cancelled all former obligations of kindred, as well as of religion.

16. In this and the following verſes our Lord alludes to ſeveral abſurd diſtinctions about the ſacredneſs of oaths made by the Jewiſh doctors, who appear to have thought that to ſwear by any creature, or by what did not bear an immediate relation to God, was of no ſignification, or at all obligatory.

Here Jeſus expoſes the maxims of the Phariſees upon their own principles. All oaths reſpect God, and therefore to ſwear by the temple, or the altar, ought, according to them, to be as ſacred and obligatory as ſwearing by God himſelf.

23. He had before explained the firſt and great commandment in a ſimilar manner.

31. i. e. your conduct in building ſepulchres for the prophets, compared with your temper and diſpoſition, ſo like that of your fathers, would make a ſtranger think, that what *you* do was only a continuation, of what *they* had begun, they killing the prophets and you burying them.

39. This is a quotation from Pſalm cxviii, 26. which is ſaid to have been always ſung in the temple at the time of their public feſtivals. How it is to be underſtood in this connection I do not ſee. It is probably a reference to the ſecond coming of Chriſt. But then his friends, and not his enemies, will rejoice at it. It may refer to the glory with which he will then appear, and the general joy that will be expreſſed on the occaſion; the Jews themſelves then receiving him as their Meſſiah.

SECTION LXXIV.

Jesus prophecies concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem, and his second coming.

Matt. XXIV. 1——41. Mark XIII. 1——32. Luke XXI, 5.——33. XVII. 20——36.

THIS chapter contains a moſt remarkable prophecy concerning the utter demolition of the temple, and the diſperſion of the Jews, as to be accompliſhed *in that generation*, when there was far from being any appearance of ſuch an event. The Jews were then at peace under the Romans, with whom they could have no proſpect of contending with ſucceſs; or if they ſhould have revolted, and been ſubdued, there was no example in all the Roman conqueſts of ſuch a devaſtation being made in any country as is here foretold to take place in this. It is remarkable that almoſt every country flouriſhed under the Roman government, more than they had done under their own; ſo that it was, in general, a bleſſing to the world. Leaſt of all was it probable that any conqueror would wiſh to deſtroy ſo fine a building as the temple. And we find that Titus, the Roman general, did uſe his utmoſt endeavours to preſerve it, but in vain.

2. This was literally accompliſhed, the very foundation of the temple being dug up.

3. *What ſhall be the ſign of thy coming, and the end of the age.*] It is probable that the diſciples imagined

that our Lord would return to punish his enemies, and then take his temporal kingdom, at leaſt ſome time before they died.

5. *Saying I am Chriſt.*] This is a prophecy of the many pretended Meſſiahs, by whom the Jews were ſo often deceived to their deſtruction.

6. *Ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars.*] There were great convulſions in the Roman empire previous to the revolt of the Jews, and the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. But it more probably refers to the inſurrections in Paleſtine.

9. *And ſhall kill you.*] The firſt great perſecution of the church was under Nero, in whoſe reign the Jewiſh war began. It was under him that Peter and Paul were put to death at Rome.

14. *And this goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world.*] i. e. in all the Roman empire. But if there be a double ſenſe of this prophecy, we may perhaps infer, that, as the firſt coming of Chriſt to judge the Jews was preceded by the preaching of the goſpel in all the Roman empire, ſo his coming to judge antichriſt (who is alſo ſaid to be *deſtroyed by the brightneſs of his coming*) may be preceded by the preaching of the goſpel in *all nations*. And as very rapid advances are now making towards the diſcovery of all the habitable world, this great event may not be far off.

15. *The abomination of deſolation*, i. e. the abomination that maketh deſolate, meaning the Roman armies, the ſtandards of which were images, and objects of adoration, which were held in abhorrence by the Jews. This is more evident from comparing this with

with the parallel paſſage in Luke xxvi. 20, where it is ſaid, *When ye ſee Jeruſalem encompaſſed with armies.*

Whoſo readeth, let him underſtand.] Theſe may be the words of the evangeliſt, who wrote about the time that ſome of theſe ſigns were taking place.

27. *As the lightning*, &c.] Alluding to the rapidity of this deſolation.

28 *Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together*] i. e. The Roman armies will find, and conquer all oppoſition, as eaſily as the eagle finds and ſeizes its prey. Here may alſo be another alluſion to the figure of eagles in the Roman ſtandards.

29 This ſeems to be the highly figurative language, in which the antient prophets deſcribed the overthrow of ſtates, the ſun, moon, and ſtars repreſenting earthly potentates, and ſuch great convulſions are always ſaid to precede the eſtabliſhment of the proper kingdom of God or of Chriſt. The ſtone cut out of the mountain without hands, which repreſents that kingdom, is in ſome way or other, to fall upon, and break in pieces, all the preceding kingdoms before itſelf become a great mountain filling the whole earth. In this part of the prophecy, therefore, there cannot, I think, be a doubt but that Jeſus alluded to this great event, and not to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; tho' it is very poſſible that ſince he declared, as we ſhall find, that he did not know the time of his ſecond coming, and therefore was left to his conjectures on the ſubject, he might connect theſe two events together, and thence might ariſe the idea of his coming being much nearer than it was. What immediately follows is certainly deſcriptive of the day

of judgment, and not of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, at leaſt not literally.

31. *And ſhall ſend his angels with a great ſound of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect.*) This is thought to refer to the care that Chriſt took of his diſciples, all of whom retired from Judea, in obedience to theſe warnings, and thereby eſcaped the general ruin. But the language is the very ſame with that in which the final coming of Chriſt to judge the world is deſcribed by our Lord, and Paul, on other occaſions; ſo that if this prophecy was not principally intended for the day of judgment, there ſhould ſeem to be at leaſt an alluſion to it, the two events being, in ſeveral reſpects, ſimilar.

34. *This generation ſhall not paſs till all theſe things be fulfilled.*) Theſe words ſeem to limit the proper meaning of all the expreſſions in the preceding verſes, to the day of judgment, as well as the deſolation of Judea.

If I might indulge a conjecture of my own, it would be, that in the verſes 29, 30, and 31, our Lord intended to deſcribe the general judgment, as an event diſtinct from what he had before ſaid concerning Judea and Jeruſalem. For it is ſaid *After the tribulation of thoſe days the ſun ſhall be darkened*, &c. As to the words *immediately after*, they may mean in the eye of God, to whom, as we read, a thouſand years are as one day. At verſe 32, *Now learn a parable of the fig tree*, our Lord returns to his original ſubject, the judgment and deſolation of Judea; and to that only I ſhould refer what

what he ſays v. 34, *This generation ſhall not paſs till all theſe things be fulfilled.*

To me it ſeems very probable, that this, and the other prophecies of our Lord led his diſciples to imagine, that his final coming to judge the world was not far diſtant. Even the apoſtle John ſeems to have had ſome expectation of this kind, when, at the concluſion of the book of Revelation, he ſays, *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* If the apoſtle had a juſt idea of the real diſtance of time that would intervene between his time and the final coming of Chriſt, and yet ſay he would come *quickly*, why might not our Lord uſe the word *immediately* in the ſame extended ſenſe?

41. In the Eaſt, Dr. Shaw ſays, moſt families grind their wheat and barley at home, having two portable millſtones for that purpoſe, that when expedition is required two perſons may aſſiſt in the operation, and that it is uſual for women only to do this buſineſs. *Shaw's Travels*, p. 251.

Mark XIII. *Take no thought before hand what you ſhall ſpeak.*] This promiſe was either confined to the apoſtolic age, or the meaning may be, that their circumſtances, and the goodneſs of their cauſe would be ſufficient, without any ſupernatural aſſiſtance, to ſuggeſt what they ought to ſay, and therefore that they did not need to be anxious about the matter.

32. *Neither the Son.*] It is very extraordinary that any perſon can read this paſſage, and imagine Chriſt to be the omniſcient God. That Chriſt ſhould know this *as God*, but be ignorant of it *as man*, is too trifling to be replied to. On this principle there could be no union

of

of the two natures, and conſequently Jeſus would be no more God than he is upon the ſcheme of Socinus.

Luke XXI. 5. Beſides the coſtly buildings of the temple itſelf, there were depoſited in the rooms belonging to it preſents of great value from wealthy and pious perſons. There was a golden table given by Pompey and ſome golden vines, Joſephus ſays, of an exquiſite workmanſhip. The heathen temples had preſents (called ἀναθήματα) of the ſame kind.

18. *But there ſhall not a hair of your head perish.* The meaning of this muſt be, that the moſt trifling loſſes would be made up to them; for juſt before he had ſaid that they would be put to death.

19. *In your patience poſſess ye your ſouls.*] Pearce would render it, *By your perſeverance you ſhall enjoy your lives*; i. e. if you continue firm in my religion, your perſeverance ſhall be rewarded with the preſervation of your lives, in the general ruin.

24. *And Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*] This ſeems to imply that the deſolation of Jeruſalem is to continue till the general converſion of the Gentiles, and that, upon this event, it is to be no more in poſſeſſion of the Gentiles, but that the Jews are to repoſſeſs it.

25. *The ſea and the waves roaring*) A figurative deſcription of convulſions among nations by wars, &c.

Ch. XVII. 20. *Not with obſervation.*] i. e. not with external pomp and ſplendor, to ſtrike the eyes of mankind.

21. *The kingdom of God is within you;*] i. e. it has already commenced, tho' it has eſcaped your obſervation.

29 *He*

29. *He rained fire.*] i. e. *God* made it to rain.

Luke XVII. 34. Upon the ſame couch, or at ſupper together. W.

SECTION LXXV.

Admonitions concerning watchfulness, with the parables of the ten Virgins, and of the Talents.

Matt. XXIV. 42——51. XXV 1——30. Mark XIII. 33, 37. Luke XXI. 34——36. XII. 35——48.

WE have ſometime done with the diſcourſes of Jeſus to the people at large. The laſt converſation he held of this kind was that in which he delivered his ſevere invective againſt the Phariſees, after their inſidious attempts to inſnare him, in order to have a pretence to put him to death. He cloſed it in ſaying that they ſhould not ſee him any more till they ſhould ſay *bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

After this he retired with his diſciples to the mount of Olives, from which, being in view of the temple, he delivered in their hearing the remarkable prophecy concerning the deſtruction of that famous edifice, and the utter deſolation of Judea. Thence he took occaſion to ſpeak of the end, not of the Jewiſh ſtate, but of the world, ſpeaking of the two events, as it appears to me, with ſufficient diſtinctneſs; ſaying that the former would come to paſs

in

in that generation, but that with reſpect to the other he was altogether ignorant, as it was known to his father only. From this he was led to ſpeak with peculiar earneſtneſs of the great duty of *watchfulness*, becauſe at ſuch an hour as we know not, the ſon of man will come, and require an account of our conduct.

51. He will ſeparate him from the honeſt. B.

Luke. XXI. 35. *As a snare.*] The Jews were ſurprized in Jeruſalem at the paſſover, which drew thither a vaſt concourſe of people, moſt of whom periſhed miſerably.

36. *And to stand before the Son of man.*] This ſeems evidently to refer to the day of judgment, and to mean their being finally approved of him.

Matt. XXV. 1. This parable reſpects not the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, but the day of judgement, and contains a ſerious admonition to us all to improve every talent committed to us, as we ſhall certainly give an account of it at the laſt day.

To underſtand this parable, it ſhould be known that it is the cuſtom in the Eaſt for the bridegroom to fetch his bride from her father's houſe in the evening, and generally by the light of lamps.

4. Chardin ſays that in many parts of the Eaſt inſtead of torches, they carry a pot of oil in one hand, and a lamp in the other.

14. This parable of the talents was delivered on a former occaſion. See Sect. LXVI.

By *talents* we are to underſtand every power or opportunity of doing good, whether derived from riches, power, knowledge, or any other advantage. We are all ſtewards

ſtewards of the manifold goodneſs of God, and as ſtewards ſhould endeavour to approve ourſelves faithful to our truſts.

SECTION LXXVI.

An Account of the last Judgment.

Matt. XXV. 31——46.

IN the diſcourſe that I am going to read to you Jeſus gives a more particular account of the final day of judgment, one of thoſe great events of which he had given a general intimation before, but of the *time* of which he acknowledged that he was ignorant. Nothing in all the ſcriptures, from the nature of the ſubject, is ſo intereſting and awful as this. It is impoſſible to peruſe it, if we give due attention to it, without emotion; being an account of the proceedings of that great day, from its reference to which every thing elſe in life derives its importance, and delivered by the perſon who is appointed by God to preſide in it.

31. Something figurative muſt be allowed in this account; but, at the ſame time, if we may depend upon the account of the apoſtle Paul, who had it by revelation from our Saviour, it muſt be in general literally true. At leaſt, there is no appearance of figure in his account. In order to comfort the Theſſalonians with reſpect to their deceaſed friends, he ſays that they who are alive at the coming of Chriſt, ſhould have no advantage

tage over thoſe who died before that event, but that on the appearance of their Saviour, the *dead in Chriſt*, as they are called, ſhall riſe firſt, and that then they who ſhall be found alive ſhall be changed, and, joining thoſe who will then be raiſed from the dead, ſhall *meet the Lord in the air*, and ſo *ſhall be for ever with him.*

In what manner the proceedings of this great day will be conducted, we cannot tell; but probably without any diſtinct or formal examination of every individual perſon, which indeed is not intimated in this account. Perhaps, by ſome means unknown to us at preſent, every perſons real character will be at once conſpicuous, ſo that the ſentence of the Judge will ſtrike all with the fulleſt conviction. But let us all attend to the account itſelf, in which we are ſo deeply intereſted.

32. To compare good men to *ſheep*, and wicked men to *goats*, is not unuſual in the ſcriptures, Ez. xxxiv 17. *Behold I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats*, Zech. x, 3. *mine anger was kindled againſt the ſhepherds, and I puniſhed the goats.*

36. The word επισκεπτομαι ſignifies not ſo much to *viſit*, as to *take the charge*, or *care of.*

37. In the Eaſtern manner of ſpeaking, *ſheep* ſignifies good men, and *goats* the bad. See Ez. xxxiv. 17. 22. Zech. x. 3. Pearce.

It is obſervable that the leading character of the wicked is preſumption, and that of the righteous humility. It is obvious to remark with reſpect to them both, that their ſentence could not have been any ſurpriſe to them, if it had been paſſed before that time, namely immediately

mediately after their deaths; and if they had lived under the execution of it from that time until the resurrection.

45. To impress the minds of the apostles with an idea of his great affection for them, was very necessary to support them during the interval between his death and resurrection. All his discourses recorded in the gospel of John have this tendency, and nothing can be more affecting and consolatory.

This account of the proceedings of the day of judgment, shews, in a strong light, the affectionate regard that Christ has for his disciples, and the interest he takes in what befalls them, considering whatever is done to them, as done to himself. It shews how very important a part of our duty is our sympathy, and concern for others; since, upon this solemn occasion, no other virtues are particularly specified. Our Lord, on another occasion, lays great stress upon it, by calling it his *own new commandment*, and the apostle John calls it both *an old and a new commandment*.

46. *Everlasting punishment.*] Αιωνιον, properly the punishment of *an entire period, age*, or *dispensation*. The future rewards of virtue are expressed by the same term, and it will probably be on some other account than the good works of the present transitory life, that the happiness of a future state will be properly eternal. It may depend upon a continuance to improve in virtue, which, however, may be *morally certain*; and the reformation of the wicked may be the consequence of the sufferings of a future state. This, however, is wisely concealed from us. We know our duty in this life, and

the

the certain conſequence of it; and we may aſſure ourſelves that the God we worſhip will do nothing unjuſt, and, therefore that there will always be a due proportion between crimes and puniſhment, virtue and reward, and there cannot be any juſtice or equity in puniſhing the offences of a ſhort life with ſufferings properly eternal, eſpecially ſuch as, tho' figuratively, are repreſented by fire.

SECTION LXXVII.

Judas covenants to betray Jeſus. The Diſciples make preparations for eating the Paſſover. Jeſus waſhes his diſciple's feet.

Matt. XXVI. 1—5, 14—19. Mark XIV. 10—17. Luke XXI. 37—38. XXII. 1—13, 25—30. John XIII. 1—17.

WE are now come to an incident in the life of Jeſus, which was the leaſt to be expected, viz. the treachery of Judas Iſcariot, one of the twelve choſen apoſtles, but which was wiſely ordered by divine providence to manifeſt the innocence of his maſter, and thereby furniſh a ſtriking evidence of the reality of his miracles, and the truth of his religion.

2, At the time that Jeſus delivered this, there was no appearance of his being in more danger than he had been in on ſeveral occaſions before; nay, in reality much leſs, becauſe his popularity with the common people was greater than it had ever been, and on this account,

in

in part, the apoſtles, as you will ſee in what I am going to read to you, were at this very time diſputing among themſelves about the chief places in his kingdom. Jeſus, however, knew by divine revelation that his death was very near. He was even apprized of the preciſe time, and of all the circumſtances of it. He tells them that he was not only to die after two days, but to be crucified. This, therefore, was probably on the Wedneſday.

5. Jeſus was ſtill popular with the common people, they having ſtill hopes that he would confound his enemies, and aſſume kingly power. When that hope failed, they abandoned him.

14. Luke ſays that *Satan entered into him*. The term *Satan* ſignifies *evil* in general, eſpecially bad diſpoſitions of mind. Thus temptation is referred to Satan or the devil; but the apoſtle James explains it when he ſays, *then is a man tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſts, and enticed*, not therefore by any thing or any being foreign to himſelf, but by ſome thing within, and belonging to himſelf. Indeed, our own depraved appetites and paſſions are abundantly ſufficient to account for all the vice and wickedneſs that there is in the world. If we be upon our guard againſt them, we need not fear any other enemy.

Judas appears to have been a worldly minded man, and to have become a follower of Jeſus from thinking, with the reſt of the apoſtles, that he would be a great king. But he wanted that diſintereſted love of truth and virtue, which, notwithſtanding all appearances, would never ſuffer the reſt of the twelve wholly to deſert their maſter, much leſs to betray him. Other

cauſes might have contributed to the fatal reſolution that he formed, eſpecially *resentment*; and we are told that the principal offence that he took was at Jeſus's commendation of Mary for beſtowing upon him a box of precious ointment, which he thought had better have been ſold, having a hope of embezzeling a part of the price. It is poſſible alſo that he might have more natural ſagacity than the other apoſtles, and concluding that he would never be a king, or perceiving that he was not much in his favour, he might think that whatever he was, or whatever he would be, it did not much concern *himself*. It is very evident that he had no ſuſpicion of Jeſus being an impoſtor. But men are often led by their paſſions to act contrary to their reaſon and better judgment, ſo as to do what they afterwards ſeverely repent of, as was the caſe with Judas.

15. Thirty ſhekels, each of which being about half a crown of our money, was no great ſum. But he was only to inform the enemies of Jeſus where they might find him in his retirement, and to conduct them to him. And in his ſtate of mind he might poſſibly think that there was no great harm in it; tho' when he ſaw his maſter condemned to die, his former regard to him might return with peculiar force, and lead him to ſee the ſame action in a very different light. It is probable that he was influenced more by reſentment, which is very apt to change, than by avarice, which is a more permanent paſſion.

18. Jeſus's telling the apoſtles theſe minute circumſtances was well calculated to ſhew them that nothing could happen to him, which he was not apprized of, and prepared

prepared for; and therefore when their conſternation on the occaſion of his death was a little over, it might enable them to think that all might be *right*, and that good would finally come out of that which then gave them ſo much diſturbance.

Luke XXII. 24. Notwithſtanding theſe repeated intimations which Jeſus gave his apoſtles, of his approaching death, ſo fully were they perſuaded that he was to be a king, that they were not prepared to believe him in the literal ſenſe of his words.

25. *Benefactors;* Ευεργεται. This was a title of ſome of the kings of Syria and Egypt.

30. We ſee here that Jeſus makes no material difference between the ſituation of himſelf, and that of his apoſtles in a future ſtate. As he is appointed to be a judge, ſo are they alſo called judges, as all princes or kings in former times were; ſo that it is perhaps to be underſtood as a title of *rank* and *power* in general, rather than of *office*. What is really meant by it, we cannot now ſay. As in this, ſo in another world, Chriſt is to be conſidered as *the firſt among many brethren*, not differing from them at all in nature, for it is ſaid that *in all things he was made like unto them*, and being rewarded for his obedience to the will of God, as all his faithful diſciples will alſo be.

John XIII. 1. What is related by John in this chapter preceded the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper, of which this evangeliſt gives no account; tho' perhaps the converſation with Peter, with which it cloſes, might have taken place after that tranſaction.

We have here a ſtriking leſſon on the ſubject of *humility*, occaſioned probably by the contention among the apoſtles, of which this evangeliſt gives no account, but which is particularly related by Luke, which of them ſhould be greateſt in their maſter's approaching kingdom. For inſtead of expecting his death, ſeveral circumſtances, as I have ſhewn, ſeem to have led them to think that he would ſoon appear in his kingly character; ſuch as his great popularity among the common people, the authority which he aſſumed in cleaning the temple, and his open diſregard of the Phariſees and rulers of the Jews, with reſpect to whom he had laid aſide all his uſual caution, notwithſtanding their well-known attempts againſt his life. And what he had ſaid in his late prophecy, of his coming in glory, to take vengeance on his enemies, might, in their ſtate of mind, contribute to the ſame effect.

By *the world* is here to be underſtood a ſtate of trial and difficulty, which he was about to leave.

He loved them unto the end.] To the very laſt period of his life, he ſhewed them marks of kindneſs and condeſcenſion.

2. This may be rendered, *When ſupper time was come.* W.

3. i. e. Having a divine commiſſion which he was going to reſign.

4. Perhaps preſently after ſitting down, as if ſomething had been neglected to be done.

7. *Thou ſhalt know hereafter.*] i. e. when I ſhall have done. Accordingly we find that then he did explain what he meant by the action.

8. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.*] Alluding not to the waſhing that he was about to adminiſter, but to his being waſhed, and made clean, in a moral ſenſe, by the influence of his doctrine.

10. Who have juſt bathed, and cannot have done more than juſt ſoiled their feet, in walking from the bath to the place of entertainment.

14. *Ye ought also to waſh one another's feet.*] i. e. to be ready to do the meaneſt offices for one another.

SECTION LXXVIII.

Jeſus diſcovers the purpoſe of Judas, foretells Peter's denial of him, and inſtitutes the Lord's Supper.

Matt. XXVI. 20——29. 31——35. Mark XIV. 18——25 27——31. Luke XXII. 21—23. 31——38 14——20. John XIII. 18——38. 1 Cor. XI. 23——26.

JESUS and his diſciples are now aſſembled in the evening on which the Jewiſh paſſover was to be eaten, and on which he knew he was to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. We cannot wonder, therefore, that in this critical ſituation his mind ſhould not be always tranquil. Being *a man*, he felt as other men would have done in the ſame circumſtances; but at the ſame time he had that dignity and elevation of mind, with which his great proſpects immediately ſucceeding his ſufferings, could not fail to

inſpire him. His mind would alſo be ſupported by a conſciouſneſs of the intimate and peculiar preſence of God with him, which you will obſerve was at this time evident by his diſtinct knowledge of every circumſtance attending this awful ſcene, or leading to it. His telling his diſciples where they ſhould find the aſs on which he was to make his entry into Jeruſalem, and how they ſhould find the man with a pitcher of water, whom they were to follow, and with whom they were to eat the paſſover, all which had literally come to paſs, were things of this nature; and, when reflected upon, would tend to give both him, and them, the greateſt confidence and ſatisfaction.

John XIII. 18. In this he probably alluded to the love which he had ſaid he had for them in the firſt verſe of his chapter, and of which as well as his condeſcenſion in ſhewing it, he had given them a proof in waſhing their feet. Of this love they had not all been equally the objects. For one of them, viz. Judas, was by no means deſerving of it.

The paſſage alluded to is Pſalm XLI, 9.

19. Every inſtance of Jeſus's foreknowledge of future events was calculated to give his diſciples ſtill fuller ſatisfaction with reſpect to his commiſſion from God, and, in their circumſtances, was particularly adapted to convince them that not only his being betrayed, but alſo his death, was expected by him, and therefore what he did not wiſh to avoid. And as theſe things did not diſcourage *him*, they ought not to diſcourage *them*.

20. What Jeſus ſaid upon this and other occaſions is probably related out of the connection in which it was delivered. What he here ſays is another inſtance of the many that he had already given his diſciples of his great attachment to them. They were conſidered by him as if they had been part of himſelf. This he had expreſſed in the ſtrongeſt manner poſſible in his account of the proceedings of the laſt day, when every act of kindneſs done to the leaſt of them, would be conſidered as done to himſelf. All theſe marks of his attachment to his diſciples, would tend to produce an equal attachment of them to him and induce them either not to abandon him in his approaching ſufferings and death, or prepare them to act with double zeal, when they ſhould be recovered from the conſternation into which that moſt unexpected event would throw them.

21. From the manner in which Jeſus expreſſed himſelf upon this occaſion, it is evident that Judas had behaved, upon the whole, in ſuch a manner as had given no ſuſpicion of his real character or deſigns. Jeſus was ſenſible that the reſt of the apoſtles would be ſurprized to hear that any of their body would act ſo ungrateful and wicked a part. Accordingly, it does not appear that their ſuſpicions fell at all upon Judas, any more than upon any other perſon among them. It muſt therefore have been by particular information from God that Jeſus was ſo well apprized of the real character and views of Judas; while his companions, who probably ſaw more of him than he did, had no ſuſpicion of him.

What is here ſaid of Jeſus being *troubled in ſpirit* alludes, no doubt, to the apprehenſion he could not but

be under on the near view of his ſufferings and death. A day or two before this he had ſaid, in reflecting upon it, *now is my ſoul troubled*; and we ſhall ſoon find him in an *agony* of mind, producing the moſt violent affections of body, under the ſame proſpect. He was affected as any other man of equal ſenſibility of mind, and whoſe views of what was to befal him were as diſtinct as his, would have been; but with a piety and reſignation, which ſhewed the excellence of his character, he preferred the will of God to his own natural inclinations, in all events.

23. This is not doubted to have been John, the writer of this goſpel, who, being reclined on the couch next to Jeſus, had his head oppoſite to his breaſt, and therefore might be ſaid to *lean on his bosom*.

In Barbary, and probably in the Eaſt, when the food is any liquid ſubſtance, after having broken their bread in little bits, they dip their hands and their morſels together into it. *Shaw's Travels*, p. 232.

25. This muſt have been ſpoken in a whiſper, as well as the anſwer of Jeſus, ſo as not to have been heard by the company.

27. This is only the phraſeology of ſcripture, ſignifying that he had then completely formed his wicked purpoſe, his own bad diſpoſition being the *Satan*, or tempter, in this caſe, and he needed no other.

29. As Jeſus ſpake openly to all the diſciples, when he ſaid that one of them would betray him, Judas muſt have known that he was the perſon intended, and therefore that, in this ſpeech of Jeſus, he alluded to what he was about to do, and by the manner in which he ſpake,

he

he muſt have perceived that his maſter was under no apprehenſion about the conſequences. This, one would have thought might have led him to reflect, and relent. But his purpoſe was formed, his meaſures were taken, his reſentment continued, and he blindly followed the impulſes of it. When men are engaged to a certain degree in bad meaſures, it is not always that a conviction of their being *wrong* will make them deſiſt from them. The firſt ſtep makes the next in a manner neceſſary It behoves, us, therefore, to attend chiefly to the beginnings of things,

32. Here we ſee Jeſus overlooking his approaching ſufferings, and anticipating his future glory. It was natural for his mind to vibrate, as it were, between the conſideration of theſe two neceſſarily connected things, his ſufferings and his future exaltation, which was to be the reward of them; ſo that we ſometimes find him diſtreſſed with the idea of the one, and ſoon after elevated with the proſpect of the other. He here argues that if God would be glorified by his death, i. e. if that event would anſwer the great purpoſes of his providence, a noble recompenſe would certainly be made to him for it; and as his death was very ſoon to take place, the reward, which was to follow it, would ſoon take place alſo.

34. This was intended to check the ambition of his apoſtles, in contending for preferment to each other's prejudice. On the contrary, the ſpirit of the goſpel leads to humility, and to perfect mutual love, and as the apoſtle ſays, *to esteem others better than ourselves.*

37. This is a leſſon againſt preſumption. In all the great perſecutions for conſcience ſake, the moſt forward to pre-

preſent themſelves were ſeldom thoſe who ſhewed the greateſt fortitude when they were put to the trial.

38. Before the next morning, and it was then the evening, ſo diſtinct and particular was the knowledge that Jeſus had of every circumſtance concerning himſelf and others on this great occaſion. When this actually came to paſs according to the prediction, it would tend to ſtrengthen the faith of Peter in the divine miſſion of Jeſus, and contribute to his recovery from the conſternation into which he would be thrown. Seeing ſo clearly that God was with his maſter, he could not think of abſolutely abandoning him, whatever might happen. His maſter, he muſt perceive, foreſaw, and was prepared for, his cruel ſufferings and death, and yet was not diſcouraged by them. Why then ſhould he?

Matt. XXVI. 26. What is here called *the cock crowing* was probably the ſound of a trumpet on changing the watches or guards, the two laſt of which, being the neareſt in the morning, appear to have been ſo called by the antient writers. It is not probable that any cocks were kept in the precincts of the temple, where the Sanhedrim was aſſembled, ſo that their crowing could be heard in that court of juſtice. T. R.

The death of Jeſus, eſpecially as preparatory to his reſurrection, being of the greateſt importance in the ſcheme of chriſtianity, and unqueſtionably the greateſt proof of his love to men, being now at hand, he thought proper to inſtitute a perpetual memorial of it, by a rite ſimilar to that of the paſſover among the Jews. That was in commemoration of the delivery of the

Jews

Jews from their bondage in Egypt, and this may be ſaid to be in commemoration of our deliverance from ſin and death by the goſpel. As the former was obligatory upon all Jews, and diſtinguiſhed them from other nations, ſo this is peculiar to, and ſhould be conſidered as obligatory upon all chriſtians, without diſtinction of age or ſex.

This is my body.] The paſchal lamb was called by the Jews *the body of the passoner*, and therefore Jeſus here ſeems to give to the bread the title of *my body*, or *body of me*, i. e. *a memorial of me*, as the paſchal lamb was of the paſſover. Pearce. There would be more weight in this remark, if the wine had not been called his blood.

28. Such, and ſo ſimple, is the chriſtian rite of the *Lord's Supper*. For ſurely, then, all who have any value for chriſtianity will attend upon it, as wearing the proper badge of their profeſſion. Be the moral uſe of this rite more or leſs, or even nothing at all, yet that it was appointed to be obſerved by one who had a right to apppoint it, viz. the founder of our faith, cannot be queſtioned.

One reaſon why it is ſo much neglected is evidently an indifference to chriſtianity, in conſequence of which none of its ordinances will be attended upon any farther than public decency requires. But with many this neglect is owing to a ſecret ſuperſtition, as if there was ſomething peculiarly hazardous in attending upon it *unworthily* in conſequence of the apoſtle Paul ſaying, in his account of it, that ſuch would *receive judgment to themſelves*; (for ſo it ought to be rendered, and not *damnati-*

damnation, as in our verſion. But from his account of the irregularities of the Corinthians in their celebration of this ordinance, it is evident that by *unworthily* he meant *improperly*, not diſtinguiſhing it from a common entertainment; and that by *judgment* he either ſimply meant *cenſure*, or ſome *temporal judgment*, with which he ſuppoſed that they were viſited on that account. It has no reference whatever to the ſtate of man after death. Our only danger ariſes from profeſſing chriſtianity itſelf without living as becomes chriſtians; and this obligation affects all who will call themſelves chriſtians, whether they attend to this particular ordinance or not.

29. As new wine was generally eſteemed the moſt delicious in the Eaſt, the expreſſion that Jeſus here makes uſe of may ſignify that he ſhould no more meet his diſciples in circumſtances of joy and rejoicing, except in a future ſtate. That we ſhall not eat or drink in a future ſtate is no where ſaid, and tho' all men will then be immortal, it may not be without the uſual ſupports of life. The only change that we are informed of with reſpect to the body is, that it will not be liable to corruption, and that the difference of ſexes will ceaſe; human beings then becoming as the angels of God in heaven. Jeſus did eat with his diſciples after his reſurrection. It may be ſaid, however, that at that time that remarkable change had not taken place in his body, it being neceſſary that he ſhould appear with his wounds open, as an evidence of his being the ſame perſon.

31. *For*

31. *For it is written, I will smite the shepherd*, &c.] The alluſion is to Zech. xiii. 7.

Luke XXII. 17. 18. Theſe two verſes ſhould probably be placed after v. 20, which will make the whole narration conſiſtent with itſelf and with Matt. xxvi, 26, and Mark xiv, 22. BEZA.

20. At the paſſover one particular cup of wine, that with which the celebration was concluded, was conſidered as more ſacred than the preceding. This our Saviour ſeems to have uſed for the purpoſe of commemorating his death. *Spencer*, p. 1187.

36. *But now he that has a purſe let him take it, and he that has no ſword let him ſell his garment and buy one.*] i. e. ſuch difficulties are now before you in travelling to preach the goſpel, that you have need of every thing that you can provide for your accommodation and defence. The expreſſion may have been proverbial, ſignifying to provide againſt impending danger in general. Pearce conſiders the word *ſword* as an interpolation, and would render the paſſage, *He that has none* (viz. a purſe or ſcrip) *let him ſell his garment and buy one.*

38. *It is enough.*) i. e. Thoſe are not the weapons that I alluded to; thoſe therefore, are now more than enow for any uſe that you will have of them.

The Catholics ſtrangely ſuppoſe that by *theſe two ſwords*, are meant the ſpiritual and temporal power of the Popes, as the ſucceſſors of Peter.

NOTES ON

PARAPHRASE.

Luke XXII. 31. And the Lord ſaid, Simon, I foreſee that you will be brought into a very trying temptation, as if Satan (by which we expreſs the principle of evil or ſin) had deſired to get poſſeſſion of you, that he might ſift and examine you, as men do corn in a ſieve. See Amos ix. 9.

Matt. XXVI. 26. *This is my body.*) This you are to conſider as a repreſentation and memorial of my body, which, like this bread, is ſhortly to be broken for you. 28. This wine alſo, is a repreſentation and memorial of my blood, which is ſhed in confirmation of that goſpel, in which the doctrines of repentance and forgiveneſs of ſin will be preached to all nations. 29. I ſhall not henceforth partake of any more entertainments with you, till I join with you in a much more delightful one in the kingdom of heaven.

SECTION LXXIX.

Jeſus comforts his diſciples before his death.

John XIV. 1——31. Matt. XXVI. 30. Mark XIV. 26. Luke XXII. 39.

WE are now come to the diſcourſes which Jeſus held with the apoſtles in the near view of his ſeparation from them by death. They ſhew the ſtrong affection that he had for them. This ſeems for ſome time to have ingroſſed all his attention, excluding even

even the conſideration of his own ſufferings. What he ſuggeſts to them on this occaſion was chiefly calculated to prevent their being *offended*, or their abandoning their faith and hope in him in a moſt trying ſituation, and for which they were not at all prepared. For their firſt attachment to Jeſus was upon the idea of his being a king, and of their having preferment in his temporal court. Here, however he apprizes them (as indeed he had frequently done before, but without their giving proper attention to it) of the ſufferings that awaited them for his ſake; but withal aſſures them of the extraordinary power with which they would be indued, and of the certainty of his ſecond coming, to take them to himſelf, and have them with him forever.

I cannot help obſerving here, how far the whole ſtrain of theſe diſcourſes of Jeſus is from the language of one who was conſcious that he was an impoſtor. We ſee here no trace of any deſign to impoſe upon the world, no meaſures to ſave himſelf from a violent death, or to deceive the world by the appearance of a reſurrection, and no directions how to make any advantage of a ſcheme, which, upon the ſuppoſition of it's being an impoſture, could have no other object than this world. As to future reputation, from being the head of a great and flouriſhing ſect, ſurely a death upon the croſs could never have appeared to be the probable way to it.

Beſides, nothing could have inſured the exiſtence and continuance of the ſcheme, but the convenience of miraculous powers, which, upon the ſuppoſition of Jeſus being an impoſtor, he muſt know that he was neither poſſeſſed of himſelf, nor could impart

part to others. Upon the whole it ſeems to me to be abſolutely impoſſible to peruſe theſe diſcourſes with any degree of attention, and retain the opinion of Jeſus being an impoſtor. On the idea of his having a divine commiſſion and of his being conſcious of it, every thing that he ſays, or does, upon the occaſion, is natural and conſiſtent; but upon any other ſuppoſition it is moſt unnatural and abſurd.

Matthew XXVI. 30. *Recited a hymn*] Υμνησαντες means only to *recite* or *ſay*, at leaſt it does not neceſſarily imply ſinging. See Pearce.

Perhaps, with a learned friend of mine, we may underſtand the *manſions in his fathers houſe*, of which Jeſus here ſpeaks, to ſignify not places of reſt and happineſs in heaven, but *ſtations of truſt and uſefulneſs upon earth*, ſuch as he was then about to quit; ſuch a place in the houſe or family of God as Moſes is ſaid, Heb. to have been *faithful* in. The paſſage may then be paraphraſed as follows. "In my father's houſe, or in his "family on earth, are many ſtations of truſt and honour "which require great activity and exertion. Theſe, "after my departure, you muſt occupy; and therefore "you cannot follow me at preſent. I go to make room "for you. But when you ſhall have diſcharged your "duty here as I have done mine, I ſhall return again, "and take you to myſelf, and then the ſeparation which "muſt take place between us at preſent will ceaſe, and "we ſhall be happy together for ever."

Nothing can be more evident then that it is the ſeparation *after his aſcenſion* of which our Lord ſpeaks, in this and the following chapters, and not of his ſeparation during

ring the time of his death. Becauſe after the ſeparation of which he ſpeaks, he would return, and take them to himſelf for ever. He is no where ſaid to be *with his father*, but only *in the grave*, from the time of his death to his reſurrection. It is equally plain that his promiſe to his diſciples, *that they ſhould be with him* is limited to the time of his return from the Father to them, that is, the time of the general reſurrection.

6. This may be underſtood to ſignify that no part of mankind will ever attain to the true knowledge of God but by means of the goſpel, and this has been abundantly verified in fact. As the apoſtle ſays, *the world by its own wisdom knew not God.* How agreable ſoever to the true light of nature is the doctrine of one God, infinitely wiſe, powerful, and good, the maker and conſtant preſerver of all things, the inſpector and the judge of all men, it is a kind of knowledge that never was actually diſcovered by the light of nature, in any age or nation of the world.

10. How is it poſſible to read theſe words with any attention, and retain the idea of Chriſt having any extraordinary power, and much leſs any proper divinity, of his own, independent of what he received from the Father. In the language of Peter he was *a man approved of God by ſigns and wonders which God did by him*, and with the ſame foreign power any other man might have done the ſame. What occaſion, therefore, could there be for any other than a man, ſo aſſiſted, to do all that our Saviour did.

12. *Greater works than theſe ſhall ye do*;] referring to the greater number of miracles that the apoſtles ſhould

work, and the greater number of converts that they would make after his aſcenſion.

14. It is evident that the requeſts here alluded to were to be made to God, and not to Chriſt: and though Chriſt is ſaid to diſpenſe theſe gifts, it could not be in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe; becauſe the powers that were in Chriſt were not *his own*, but given him by the father, as we are moſt expreſsly and repeatedly informed. How far Chriſt himſelf was inſtrumental in conveying miraculous powers to the apoſtles, we cannot tell. The *comforter*, or the *holy spirit*, from which theſe powers are deſcribed as proceeding, is ſometimes ſaid to be ſent by the Father, and ſometimes by Chriſt; from the Father only in a proper ſenſe, tho' it might be through Chriſt as a medium. Thus the ſpirit of God is ſaid to paſs from Moſes to the elders of Iſrael, but ſtill it was the gift of God, and nothing that originated with Moſes.

16. *Advocate.*] The word παρακλητος which we have rendered *Comforter*, Grotius ſuppoſes to ſignify more properly an *advocate*, or one who undertakes to plead the cauſe of the accuſed, and to act for them.

For ever, εις τον αιωνα, for *an age*, or *the age*, which may be ſuppoſed to be the term of their lives. Some reſtrict all theſe promiſes to the period of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, when the αιων is ſuppoſed to end.

19. i. e: *To lay hold of*, and *take from you*, as has been done with reſpect to me.

20. Here

20. Here the union of Chriſt with the Father is moſt clearly expreſſed to be no other than that which ſubſiſts between himſelf and his diſciples, and between his diſciples and God himſelf, they being all one together. It could not, therefore, be an union of nature, but of affection only. Notwithſtanding this union, they remained perfectly diſtinct from each other, as much as any other perſons whatever.

24. We have here another clear acknowledgment that whatever Chriſt taught, he had from God, and not from himſelf.

26. *In my name* here ſignifies *in my place.* Jeſus ſpeaking in this figurative manner of the ſpirit of God his Father, which had dwelt in him, and which would enable his apoſtles to work miracles after his death, has led many to imagine that it is a *real perſon*, diſtinct from God. But the apoſtles do not appear to have underſtood him in this manner. For Paul ſpeaks of the ſpirit of God as bearing the ſame relation to God, that the ſpirit of man does to a man. But the *ſpirit of man* is certainly *a man*, and therefore the *ſpirit of God*, muſt be *God*, that is the *power of God.*

27. i. e. I ſpeak with more ſincerity, and a more hearty good will, than men of the world generally have when they uſe this phraſe.

28. Chriſt uniformly ſpeaks of himſelf as *inferior to the Father*, juſt as an ambaſſador is inferior to him that ſends him; and there was a peculiar propriety in his making the obſervation in the circumſtances in which he then was. It is the ſame that commonly occurs to pi-

ous perſons when they die, and leave their children and friends in the hands of God, who, they naturally ſay, can take better care of them than they could do.

To ſuppoſe that Jeſus ſpake of his *human nature only*, when he ſaid that he was inferior to the Father, is to ſuppoſe that he meant to puzzle and miſlead his hearers. By *himself*, certainly he meant *his whole self*, and not a part only. How abſurd would it be for a man to ſay that he had no ſenſe or underſtanding, meaning only that he had none in his hands, or his feet. On the ſame ſtrange principle alſo, Chriſt might have ſaid that he ſhould never die, or riſe again, ſecretly meaning his divine nature only, which was not ſubject to death. To make this uſe of language can only be to puzzle and deceive, a deſign which certainly can never be aſcribed to our Saviour.

This text was always underſtood to expreſs a real ſuperiority in the Father to the Son, even after the notion of the divinity of Chriſt had gained ground in the Chriſtian Church. There was a long interval between the notion of Chriſt being God, in ſome low and qualified ſenſe of the word, and that of his being God equal in power and glory to the Father. Such a great corruption of chriſtianity as this did not riſe to its full height at once, but by very ſlow degrees.

31. i. e. Tho' I ſhall be apprehended, and be delivered up to the powers of this world, who will put me to death, it will not be on account of any guilt of mine, but to anſwer the great purpoſes of divine providence, in giving the moſt undeniable proof of my having had a com-

a commiſſion from God, and of God having loved, honoured, and diſtinguiſhed me on that account.

PARAPHRASE.

John XIV. 1. I foreſee the conſternation into which you will be thrown by my approaching death, and temporary ſeparation from you; but be not overwhelmed with grief on this occaſion. Believe in God, as the ſupreme governor of the world, according to whoſe will every thing comes to paſs, and believe that I am the Meſſiah, and therefore that I cannot fail to arrive to all the glory that is promiſed to him by God. 2. And the glory which is deſigned for thoſe that love and obey God is not confined to the Meſſiah himſelf; for in my Father's houſe there is room for great numbers beſides me. I ſhould otherwiſe have appriſed you of it. At preſent I am only leaving you for a ſhort time, in order to go and prepare a place for you there. 3. When I ſhall have done this, I ſhall certainly return, and take you to myſelf; that from thenceforward we may never be ſeparated again. 4. Whither it is that I go, and the way to the place, you cannot but know. 5. Thomas ſays to him, Lord, we really do not know whither thou art going, and therefore we cannot poſſibly know the way. 6. Jeſus ſays, I am going to my Father, with whom is heavenly life and happineſs; and I myſelf am ſent by him to point out the true way to that eternal life. There is no other way than that which I teach.

8. Philip ſays to him, Shew us the Father and we ſhall be ſatisfied. 9. Jeſus replies, Can I have been ſo long time with you, and you ſhould not have known me?

All that can be known of God is to be learned from thoſe who bear his commiſſion, which I do in a very extraordinary manner. 10. For the Father himſelf ſpeaks and acts by me in a more direct manner than he thought proper to do by any of the former prophets, inſomuch that the very words that I ſpeak are not to be conſidered as my own words, but as thoſe of the Father ſpeaking by me; and alſo the works that I do are in reality not mine, but his. 11. If you do not believe my mere aſſertion of this, yet believe the works that I perform, which are of ſuch a nature, as that they cannot be ſuppoſed to be performed by any other than ſupreme power. Yet, great as theſe works are, the ſame, and even greater ſhall be performed by yourſelves, who are my apoſtles; for the goſpel will be preached with much more ſucceſs by *you* than it has been by me. The goſpel is to have an univerſal ſpread, and I do not continue here a ſufficient time for that purpoſe. 13. There is nothing ſo extraordinary, that ſhall be ſubſervient to the propagation of the goſpel, that you ſhall aſk of the Father in my name, but what will be granted to you. 14. With reſpect to works of power, the aſſurance that I now give you has no reſtriction, or limitation, whatever.

15. I plainly perceive by your countenance and manner, the affection that you bear me, and the concern that you feel at the idea of my ſeparation from you; but let your love to me be expreſſed not in uſeleſs ſorrow, but in keeping my commandments. 16. And to make you ample amends for my ſeparation from you, I will pray the Father to ſend you what will be an abundant conſolation

lation to you during my abſence, and what will abide with you forever. 17. I mean that divine ſpirit of truth, which has always accompanied myſelf, and it is what the powers of this world cannot ſeize upon, and force from you, as they have done with reſpect to me; becauſe it is what the world is altogether unacquainted with, and what is inviſible to them; but it ſhall be intimately known to you, for it ſhall dwell with you, and in you.

18. Beſides you will have ſomething more to leſſen your affliction than even this conſideration, for I myſelf ſhall return to you again, but in ſuch a manner as I ſhall not return to the world. 19. And this my coming to you again, after my reſurrection, will be an aſſurance of a future and immortal life to yourſelves. 20. After this event you will be ſo enlightened with the ſpirit of truth, that you will have a perfect knowledge of the intimate union that ſubſiſts between me and my Father, and of us both with yourſelves. 21. He that keepeth my commandments gives the beſt proof of his love and attachment to me, and this love will be amply returned both by my Father and myſelf.

22. Judas (not Judas Iſcariot, but he that was the brother of James) ſays to him, How is it that thou wilt ſhew thyſelf to us, and not to the world (taking it for granted that he was to be a temporal prince, and, therefore, could not be concealed, or unknown) 23. Jeſus replies, Conſider again what I have juſt ſaid, and you will perceive that I did not mean a corporeal and viſible preſence, even to yourſelves. Whoſoever loves me, and ſhall manifeſt that love by keeping my commandments, my Father himſelf will love him, and both of us

will entertain the moſt ſincere affection for him. It is this, my love and affection that will ever accompany him, and it is a thing of much more value than my corporeal preſence. 24. They who love me not will be deſtitute of this advantage, and the favourable preſence of God is of more value than all things elſe. *Thy preſence*, ſays David, *is fullneſs of joy, thy favour is light, and thy loving kindneſs better than light.* And that by keeping my commandments you will enſure this favourable preſence of God with you is evident, becauſe my words are only his words, being thoſe which I deliver in commiſſion from him.

25. I am ſenſible however, that what I ſay now will not be underſtood by you in its full extent. 26. But when the Divine Spirit ſhall come, after my aſcenſion, you will recollect what I have ſaid, and will then be better able to underſtand it. 27. I take leave of you by wiſhing you *peace*, uſing the ſame language as is cuſtomary with men; but I uſe it with more ſincerity than they generally do. My peace, and favourable preſence will never leave you. Therefore let not your heart be troubled, and do not give way to fear. 28. I have, indeed, told you, that I ſhall be abſent from you for a time; but if you loved me, you would rather rejoice on this account, becauſe I am going to my Father, who is infinitely my ſuperior, and the ſource of all honour and happineſs.

29. I have purpoſely forewarned you of this, that you may not be diſconcerted at it, but, on the contrary, may rather have your faith increaſed on this account, becauſe I have foretold what you will find to be true.

30 From

30. From this time I ſhall not have much to ſay to you. The powers of this world will come, and put me to death, but not for any crime of which they will be able to convict me; but my ſubmiſſion to death will convince the world how entirely reſigned I am to the will of my Father, who requires this ſacrifice of me. But it is now time to depart from this place.

SECTION LXXX.

Jeſus compares himſelf to a Vine.

John XV. 1——27.

THIS diſcourſe was probably held with the apoſtles, in their way from the place where they had eaten the paſſover to the garden in which he had his agony. It was then the time of full moon, and their way was along the mount of Olives, which alſo abounded with vines. The ſight of ſome of theſe trees, or their going through a vineyard, might ſuggeſt the leading ſentiments of Jeſus's addreſs to his apoſtles at this time.

6. In this ſaying of our Saviour the Papiſts have found their authority for *burning* heretics, in preference to putting them to any other kind of death. But had it been the intention of our Saviour that thoſe who apoſtatiſed from the true faith of the goſpel ſhould actually be put to death, in any form, we ſhould certainly have found ſome more expreſs authority for it than this.

this. On the contrary, nothing can be more oppoſite to the nature and ſpirit of chriſtianity than *violence* of any kind. That would be to make it a *kingdom of this world*, its duties being enforced by civil penalties, which are the ſanctions of all civil laws.

10. It is impoſſible not to perceive every where how far Jeſus was from aſſuming *equality with God*. The humbleſt of our race could not expreſs a ſtronger ſenſe of piety, and a more unreſerved ſubmiſſion to the will of God, than he always did.

13. Here Jeſus evidently ſpeaks of his voluntary ſubmiſſion to death as the greateſt inſtance of his love to mankind. But could he with truth have ſaid this, if, from the love that he bore to the human race, he had condeſcended to leave a ſtate of antecedent glory with God, had deſcended from ſo high a rank as that of the creator of the world, and from being a purely ſpiritual being, have become incarnate. Not only are theſe circumſtances not mentioned as the greateſt proof of his love to men, but they are never ſo much as refered to at all, on any occaſion in which his love to men, or their love to him, is mentioned. And ſurely a thing of ſuch an extraordinary nature as this could not have been wholly overlooked, if it had been an inſtance of the love of Chriſt to us, and of courſe a juſt motive for our gratitude to him.

17. The apoſtles had ſhewed many inſtances of jealouſy of each other. Nor can we wonder at this, when we conſider that they expected to be rivals in their maſter's eſteem, and competitors for the chief honours of his temporal kingdom. He therefore takes every opportu-

opportunity of repreſſing this ſpirit, and of inculcating the oppoſite temper of mutual love; forewarning them of the occaſion they would have for it, when the world would hate and perſecute them, ſo that their chief reſource in this life would be in their ſincere and ardent friendſhip for each other.

This peculiarly ſtrong affection of chriſtians towards each other was always conſpicuous in times of perſecution, and from this ſource, together with their firm confidence in God, and their future glorious proſpects, they have derived a ſatisfaction even in this life, which has more than compenſated for all their ſufferings in it, ſo as to verify our Saviour's promiſe to them, that they ſhould, *with perſecution, receive tenfold more in this life*, as well as *in the world to come life everlaſting*. This, at leaſt, appears to have been the caſe in general, to thoſe who have attended to the hiſtory of perſecutions; tho' there muſt, no doubt, have been many exceptions. Thoſe, however, who have ſuffered the moſt have had many valuable conſolations, and the leſs they have had of their reward here, the more will be reſerved for them hereafter.

John XV. 20. *If they have kept my ſayings.*] Ετηρησαν This may be rendered, *if they have watched my words*, i. e. with an inſidious and malicious deſign, *they will watch yours alſo*; and this rendering is perhaps more agreable to the context.

26. Here this ſpirit, which is promiſed to the apoſtles, and which was to enable them to work miracles, is ſaid to proceed from the father being in reality, nothing more than the power or ſpirit of God the Father, the

the ſame power by which Chriſt himſelf had worked his miracles. Afterwards when this ſpirit was thought to be a proper intelligent perſon, diſtinct from the Father or the Son, it was imagined that it derived its origin from the father by way of *emanation* from him, and not in the manner of a proper *creation*. But becauſe this ſpirit is likewiſe ſaid to be ſent by Chriſt, or to proceed from him, it was imagined that he muſt in ſome way or other, proceed, or iſſue, from both the father and the ſon. Upon this idle queſtion the two great parts of the Chriſtian Church, the Eaſtern and the Weſtern divided, and excommunicated one another; the Greek church maintaining that the holy ſpirit proceeds from the Father only, and the Weſtern, or Latin church, that he proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Upon either of theſe hypotheſes, we cannot wonder that they were puzzled to account for this ſpirit *proceeding from* the Father, or from the Father and the Son, and yet be *equal* in eternity, power, and glory, with each of them.

27. That is, as men, they were proper and unexceptionable witneſſes of his whole conduct, of his diſcourſes, and his miracles, and eſpecially of his reſurrection from the dead,

PARAPHRASE.

John XV. 1. That you may have a more diſtinct idea of what I mean concerning the intimate union that ſubſiſts between you and me, and of our common relation to my father, of the great object and end of this union, and of the importance of it to yourſelves, conſider

der me as the vine, and my father as the husbandman, who attends to, and cultivates this vine. 2. Every branch belonging to me that beareth not fruit, he cuts off in pruning, and every branch that beareth fruit he cleanses, freeing it from every obstruction to its growth and fructification, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3. At present you are thus cleansed, through the influence of my doctrine, and consequently are in a capacity of bearing much fruit. 4. See therefore that this union between us be carefully maintained. For as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it remain in connection with the vine, so neither can you bring forth the fruits of righteousness, but by the influence of my doctrine. 25. Now remember that I am the vine, and that you are the branches; so that by adhering to my doctrine, by which your connection with me is preserved, you will bear fruit, but that otherwise you will do nothing. 6. Besides the consequences of abandoning your relationship to me, or giving up the profession of the gospel, is truly alarming. Any person in this situation is in the condition of a branch that is cut from the vine by pruning; and all such branches, not being fit to be put to any other use, men gather into bundles, and burn them. 7. But the consequence of your union with me will be most glorious and happy. You will then bear the same relation to my Father that I myself do, and as he always hears me, so you also will never pray to him in vain. 8. In fact my Father will consider himself as honoured by your obedience to his will, and distinguishing yourselves by a life of virtue and goodness, which is the great object and end of your becoming my disciples.

9. To

9. To drop the allufion to the vine, conſider your-ſelves as bearing the ſame relation to me that I do to my Father. For as the Father has loved me, ſo have I loved you, and it is my moſt earneſt deſire, that you would continue the proper objects of my love, as I do of my Father's love. 10. This you will be ſure to do by adhering to my doctrine, and keeping my command-ments; for it is by the ſame means that I ſecure my Father's affection to me; for it is only by keeping his commandments that I continue to be the object of his love. 11. I give you theſe views of the nature and im-portance of your union with me, that, in the preſent de-jected ſtate of your minds, you may ſtill preſerve ſome-thing of that inward joy and ſatisfaction which has ne-ver wholly deſerted me, and will not deſert me entire-ly, even in my approaching ſufferings; and that noth-ing may prevent this joy from riſing to its proper height.

12. There is another important inſtruction which re-ſults both from the conſideration of your union with me, as branches to a vine, and of the equal love that I bear to you, which is, that you love one another as I have loved you; and this you muſt conſider as my earneſt injunction and command. 13. To judge of the great-neſs of the love that I bear to you, and what you ought to bear one another; conſider the proof that I am about to give you of it, which is the greateſt that any man can give to his friends, viz. to lay down my life for you. 14. Now I ſhall conſider myſelf as bound to you in this moſt ſacred tie of perfect friendſhip, ſo long as you do what-ever I command you. 15. For though I uſe this lan-guage, which you may think moſt ſuited to the charac-

ter

ter of a maſter, it is plain that I conſider you not as ſlaves, but as friends; becauſe no ſlave, or even ſervant, is indulged in that intimate familiarity, and unreſerved communication, in which I have indulged you. For I have concealed nothing from you of what my Father has communicated to me.

16. You muſt allow it to be a proof of my ſuperior affection to you, that it was not you, who of your own accord attached yourſelves to me, in the manner in which you now do; but it was the conſequence of my particularly calling and ſingling you out to become my immediate followers and apoſtles. I did it for the important purpoſe of your diſtinguiſhing yourſelves as preachers of righteouſneſs to all the world, and by your holy and exemplary lives to give you the ſame intereſt with my Father that I myſelf have, ſo that whatever you aſk of him he may always give it to you. 17. This conſideration ſhould give my exhortations the more weight with you, and I repeat it again as my moſt expreſs command, that you ſincerely love one another. 18. And let this love that you bear to one another make you amends for the hatred that you muſt expect the world will bear you. Conſider, alſo, that in conſequence of your ſtrict union with me, you cannot expect any other than the ſame treatment that I myſelf have met with; and you know that the world has hated me before it hated you, and this, with reſpect to us both, is no more than might have been expected from the difference of our intereſts and purſuits. 19. If you were of the world, and reſembled the men of the world, in your principles and purſuits, you would have ſtood the ſame chance for popular

popular applauſe and favour that others have. But becauſe in this ſenſe you are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20. Remember alſo what I ſaid to you on a former occaſion: viz. that the ſervant is not greater than his maſter. If, therefore, they have perſecuted me, you cannot expect more favour at their hands. They will certainly, for the very ſame reaſon, perſecute you alſo; and you cannot expect that the world in general will be perſuaded and governed by you any more than they have been by me. 21. Indeed all the ill treatment that you will meet with from the world is only on account of your relation to me, and the foundation of the whole is a general ignorance concerning God, and of his real deſigns in my miſſion.

22. The ſins of the Jews, our preſent perſecutors, have been greatly aggravated by my perſonal intercourſe with them. Without this they would *comparatively* have had no ſin, but now their conduct will admit of no apology. 23. For the hatred they have ſhewn to me proceeds from ſuch a malignant diſpoſition of mind, as may be deemed a hatred and oppoſition to my father himſelf. 24. The miraculous works that I have performed are ſo evidently done by the power of God himſelf, that they may be ſaid to have ſeen, and to have hated him, as well as myſelf. 25. But this is another inſtance in which the ancient prophecies concerning me, and my reception in the world, are fulfilled; for it is written, Pſalm xxxv, 19, concerning David immediately,

diately, but what is much more eminently true of myſelf, *They hated me without a cauſe.*

26. But beſides this evidence of my divine miſſion, which reſults of my own miraculous works, I ſhall alſo have another witneſs in the Holy Spirit, which I ſhall ſend to you from the Father. For the works that you will be enabled to perform by that ſpirit will be a farther atteſtation of my miſſion. 27. And you yourſelves alſo, in your proper characters, as men, and as credible witneſſes of what you have heard and ſeen, will ſtrengthen this evidence by your own direct teſtimony; becauſe you have been with me from the beginning, and therefore are fully acquainted with my doctrine and miracles.

SECTION LXXXI.

The Promiſe of the Holy Spirit.

John XVI. 1——33.

THIS chapter contains a continuation of the diſcourſe that Jeſus held with his apoſtles as they went from Jeruſalem to the garden of Gethſemane. It is well calculated to prepare them for his ſeparation from them; giving them ſome idea of the hardſhips to which they would be expoſed, and of the noble recompence that was reſerved for them. This was the great object of Jeſus in the whole of this addreſs, appears from the concluſion of it v, 33. *these things I have ſpoken unto you that ye might have peace. In the world,*

ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

2. How unlike is this to the language of an impoſtor, who could not have expected any followers but from the hope of wealth, power, and diſtinction in this world. Leaſt of all could he have any other proſpect from *Jews*, who expected a Meſſiah who would be a prince, and who would give them wealth and power, and not one in whoſe cauſe they were to ſuffer and die.

4. There was, therefore, nothing particularly diſcouraging in their caſe, and whatever might have occurred, he himſelf was at hand, to adviſe and comfort them.

7. While Jeſus continued with his diſciples, that divine power, by which his miſſion was confirmed, reſided with *him*, tho' it was occaſionally imparted to the apoſtles. When he ſhould be removed from them, that power would remain with them, and thereby give them the fulleſt conviction of his divine miſſion, and of theirs in connection with it. This power is figuratively ſpoken of as a *perſon*, becauſe, with reſpect to the apoſtles, it was to come in the place of Jeſus, who was a proper perſon, and to be the ſame to them that he had been. But, diveſted of figure, the *Spirit of God* always means the *power of God* or *God himſelf*, whoſe power it is, juſt as the *ſpirit of a man*, is *a man*, and nothing foreign to him.

11. There is much obſcurity in theſe verſes. I ſhall endeavour to explain them in the paraphraſe.

13. It

13. It is evident that at the death of Jeſus the apoſtles were very ignorant of many things relating to his kingdom, and their prejudices prevented them from underſtanding what he ſaid to them on that ſubject. During his death they were in a ſtate of utter conſternation; but after his reſurrection they expected, as before, that he would *reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael.* His aſcenſion, and the deſcent of the ſpirit upon themſelves, removed all their prejudices; but not perhaps by any direct inſtructions that were given them, but their miſtaken ideas would be corrected of courſe, by the *facts*, by reflecting on what Jeſus had ſaid to them, and by comparing one thing with another. Seeing their maſter actually removed from the world, they muſt clearly ſee, without any information, that he was not to reign here.

The ancient chriſtian writers, who were advocates for the pre-exiſtence and divinity of Chriſt, always ſaid that theſe were the doctrines which the apoſtles were not then prepared to receive; for that having expected a mere man for their Meſſiah, ſuch ſublime tenets as theſe would have ſhocked all their prejudices. They ſuppoſed therefore that he was conſidered in no higher character than that of an eminent prophet, till the deſcent of the ſpirit upon the day of pentecoſt; and alſo that, tho' from that time the apoſtles were acquainted with the true character of their maſter, they did not think proper to divulge the ſecret to many others, leſt they ſhould offend the ſame prejudices by which themſelves had been influenced. In conſequence of this, they always ſaid that theſe doctrines were never taught

with clearneſs and effect till the publication of the goſpel of John, which they ſuppoſed to have been written after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. In the mean time, they acknowledged that the ſimple *unitarian doctrine* was taught to all the chriſtian world.

On theſe principles they endeavour to account for its general prevalence in the early ages, and for its continuance till their own times. But nothing can be conceived more improbable than that the apoſtles ſhould have acted ſuch a part as this. It was utterly unſuitable to the ſimplicity of their characters, nor does the fact at all correſpond to this hypotheſis. For the publication of John's goſpel made no change whatever in the ſentiments of chriſtians on this ſubject; and all the chriſtian world were ſimply unitarians, knowing nothing of the pre-exiſtence or divinity of Chriſt, till long after this time, when thoſe doctrines came in from the Platonic philoſophy.

15. i. e. By the gift of God the father, as he elſewhere ſays, *All things are given unto me of my Father*, and again, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* He was far from claiming any thing as *of himſelf*, and not given to him by God, whatever others have injudiciouſly aſſerted for him.

19. This *little while* which our Lord ſpeaks of comprehends the whole time between his departure from his apoſtles after his aſcenſion, and his coming again to judge the world and receive them to himſelf. The exact time of this greateſt of all events, Jeſus himſelf ſays he was not acquainted with, but he might call it *a little time*, in order to expreſs the *certainty* of it. And tho'

tho' the interval be with reſpect to the term of human life a long one, yet in the eye of God, and with reſpect to the whole of our own exiſtence, it is very ſhort, and to each individual will appear to be ſo. For as we ſhall be inſenſible of the time that elapſes while we are at reſt in the grave, it will ſeem to us as as if we ſhut our eyes on this world, and immediately opened them at the general reſurrection, a moſt awful and alarming conſideration.

23. We ſee here that Chriſt is not to be the object of worſhip or prayer in any reſpect, notwithſtanding any thing he may have to do in the government of the church, from the time of his aſcenſion into heaven to his ſecond coming, concerning which we are intirely ignorant.

26. *I say unto you that I shall not pray the Father for you.* T. R.

27. This may ſatisfy us that what ſome have ſuppoſed concerning the *intercession of Christ* with God for us is needleſs. We are to addreſs our prayers to God himſelf immediately; and his affection for us is ſuch as will always induce him to grant whatever is proper for us, without the interceſſion, or mediation, of any being whatever for us. We have nothing to do but to render ourſelves the proper objects of his favour.

28. By *the world* in this place we are to underſtand not the material world, conſiſting of land and water, but the public theatre of uſefulneſs, a public character and ſtation, and conſequently a ſcene of activity and trial. We cannot therefore infer from this language that Jeſus exiſted before he made his appearance in what is

called the world. This is ſufficiently explained by what he himſelf ſays in the next chapter, v. 18. *As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo I have alſo ſent them into the world.* For certainly the apoſtles had not exiſted before they came into the world. But at the time that Jeſus was ſpeaking they were not in the world in the ſenſe in which he uſed the term, but were to go into it afterwards, when he ſhould leave it; that is, they were to ſucceed to that ſcene of great activity and public ſervice which he was to quit.

PARAPHRASE.

John XVI. 1. Theſe things, reſpecting my own ſufferings and yours, as related to me, I have now informed you of, that you may not be ſurprized and offended when they ſhall come to paſs. 2. You will not only be expelled from ſynagogues, as perſons unworthy the ſociety of men of virtue and religion, but you will even be put to death, as unworthy of living in human ſociety; and they who treat you in this manner will think that thereby they are doing God ſervice. 3. And this they will do from their ignorance of the character and deſigns of God, and of my miſſion from him.

4. Theſe things I forewarn you of, that when the ſufferings which I now predict ſhall actually take place, you may remember what I now ſay, in order to comfort you, and enable you to bear them. 5. But I did not tell you of thoſe things when you firſt became my followers, becauſe while I live, it is I, and not you, who are the objects of popular reſentment. But now that I am going to leave you, when you muſt yourſelves ſtand forth

forth in the ſame cauſe, it becomes abſolutely neceſſary that I give you this notice.

6. But though I talk to you in this manner about my departure from you, you expreſs no deſire to know whither it is that I am going, tho' you ſeem to be exceedingly concerned and dejected at the thought of my being ſeparated from you. 7. Be aſſured, however, that it is for your own advantage that I leave you; for if I do not leave you, the holy ſpirit, of whom I have told you that he will ſupply my place, and that he will be your advocate and aſſiſtant, during my abſence, will not come to you; and I go in order to ſend him to you.

8. Now when he is come, he will act the part of an advocate, as in a court of juſtice, and will arraign the world which has rejected me on three heads of accuſation, viz. of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment. 9 He will prove by the miraculous works which he will enable you to perform, that the Jews have been guilty of a very great ſin in rejecting me, in whoſe name the miracles wrought by you will be performed. 10. He will convince the world of my innocence, and righteouſneſs, as having the ſeal of divine approbation in my reſurrection and aſcenſion into heaven. 11. It will alſo appear that, beſides being ſimply approved by God, I ſhall be conſtituted univerſal judge, and ſhall accordingly execute juſtice, and inflict the moſt exemplary puniſhment upon thoſe powers of the world that were guilty of my death.

12. There are many more things that I have to communicate to you, but your minds are not yet prepared

to receive them, on account of your prejudices and miſapprehenſions. 13. But the divine ſpirit, with which you will be inſpired, will enlighten your minds farther, and inform you of all things that will be neceſſary for you to know. For what he will communicate to you will be by commiſſion from my father and me, and not from himſelf. And he will not only explain to you what you would not otherwiſe have been able to underſtand, if I ſhould tell them to you in perſon at preſent, but he will likewiſe enable you to foretel future events, as an evidence of his being the ſpirit of the true God, who alone can look with certainty into the events of future time.

14. As my ambaſſador and ſubſtitute, every thing that he does will tend to honour me. For what he delivers to you will be the things that belong to me. 15. It is true that, as ſtrictly ſpeaking, this advocate is no other than the ſpirit of God, the things that he will communicate to you will be the things of God my father; but nevertheleſs they may be ſaid to be *mine*, becauſe every thing that relates to the kingdom of God in the world, which purpoſe only this extraordinary effuſion of the ſpirit is to ſubſerve, is committed to my direction and ſuperintendance.

16. I muſt again aſſure you for your conſolation that my ſeparation from you is but for a time. It may even be called a ſhort time; and when that ſhort time ſhall be expired, I ſhall return to you, and during my ſeparation from you I ſhall be with my Father. 17, 18, 19. His diſciples, not clearly underſtanding what he meant, and

and not caring to queſtion him much farther about his meaning, Jeſus perceived it, and ſaid, 20. The time that I refer to will be a ſeaſon of ſorrow to you, and of joy to the world our enemies; but your ſorrow will be ſoon turned into joy, when we meet never to be parted any more. 21. So that your ſorrows will reſemble the pains of childbearing, which are immediately ſucceeded by a joy which is more than a recompence for them. 22. Though, therefore, you be ſorrowful now, you will rejoice when I return to you, and that joy will have no farther interruption.

23. During my ſeparation from you, you cannot have recourſe to me, as you now have, upon every emergency; but you will ſuffer no inconvenience on that account, for whatever you aſk of the father, inſtead of applying to me, he will give it you. 24. Hitherto you have not applied to the father in your difficulties, but whenever you do it, your requeſts will be favourably heard, and your joy and ſatisfaction on that account will be very great. 25. At preſent I ſpeak to you in proverbs, uſing expreſſions which have neceſſarily a degree of obſcurity attending them; but the time is at hand when, by means of the ſpirit of truth which I have promiſed you, I ſhall diſcover to you in a plainer manner the great myſteries of the kingdom of heaven.

26. At that day you will apply to the father as my diſciples, and there will be no occaſion to pray to him for you. You muſt, therefore, addreſs yourſelves to God immediately. 27. For it is not I only, but God himſelf who loveth you, becauſe you have loved me, and

and have believed in my miſſion from him. 28 It is my father who, at the commencement of my public miniſtry, gave me my commiſſion, and ſent me into the world, into this ſtate of activity, trial, and temptation, and having now finiſhed the work which he gave me to do, I am about to leave the world and go to him.

29. The diſciples, who perceived that he ſpake with a reference to the doubts and difficulties which they had in their own minds, but which they had not directly mentioned to him, being ſtruck with this circumſtance, replied, Now thou ſpeakeſt plainly enough without any obſcurity. 30. We are ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and haſt no need that thou ſhould mention our doubts and difficulties to thee. By this we know that thou muſt be a prophet from God, and the promiſed Meſſiah.

31. Jeſus ſaid, Do you now believe? 32. Your faith will ſoon be put to a ſeverer trial than you expect; and in this trial I foreſee that you will all abandon me, and leave me alone, as far as it is in your power to leave me alone; for the father is always with me, and inſeparable from me. 33. The purport of the whole of this diſcourſe is, that notwithſtanding all the trials and ſufferings to which you may be expoſed in the world, yet, depending upon my promiſes and encouragements, you may enjoy peace and ſatisfaction in your own minds: and as to the tribulation which you may meet with in and from the world, be not concerned at it. I have gone before you, have encountered the ſame difficulties and ſufferings, and have overcome

come them. This conſideration will make it eaſier for you to riſe ſuperior to them alſo.

SECTION LXXXII.

Jeſus prays for his Diſciples.

John XVII. 1——26.

IN the courſe of our Saviour's hiſtory we have ſeen many examples of his piety. He ever bore in mind that he came *not to do his own will but the will of his Father who ſent him*, and *to finiſh his work*, and his ſubmiſſion to the will of his Father, even in the greateſt trials, was perfect and moſt exemplary. We have here, however, the moſt ſolemn act of his devotion of which we have any account. It was delivered in the hearing of his apoſtles, and had the ſame object with the diſcourſes preceding it, viz. to ſtrengthen their faith and hope in him, notwithſtanding the ſevere trials to which they would ſoon be expoſed. He expreſſes his own confidence in the divine favour and the happineſs intended in the divine councils for himſelf and all his faithful followers.

In the courſe of this prayer we ſhall ſee many inſtances, not only of Jeſus regarding the Father as the only true God, and of courſe the only proper object of worſhip, but of his conſidering his diſciples as ſtanding in the ſame relation to God with himſelf. As he was the *Son of God*, ſo all chriſtians are likewiſe called *Sons of God*

God and in the moſt figurative language, *heirs of God and joint heirs with Chriſt Jeſus*, who may therefore be called *our elder brother*, entitled to ſome particular privileges, but of the ſame nature with ourſelves, ſo that all the difference between us is in degree only and not in kind.

3. How plainly here is the Father diſtinguiſhed as the only true God, and not a trinity of perſons, comprehending the Son and the Holy Spirit, as well as the Father. The words *Jeſus Chriſt* in this verſe are thought to be an early interpolation, as Jeſus would hardly mention his own name in this prayer. It is a thing that was never done by him on any other occaſion, and muſt have been unnatural.

5. This *glory* muſt mean that which Chriſt had in the divine councils only, before the foundation of the world, which is agreable to the uſual phraſeology of ſcripture. If every phraſe of this kind be interpreted literally, it muſt be maintained, not only that Chriſt *exiſted* but alſo that he was *crucified*, before the foundation of the world. For he is called Rev. xiii, 8. *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.* We ourſelves muſt alſo have pre-exiſted, as well as Chriſt, for chriſtians are ſaid, Ephe. i. 4. *to be choſen in Chriſt before the foundation of the world.* Beſides, what propriety could there be in Chriſt praying, as the reward of his ſufferings, for the ſame ſtate of glory that he had enjoyed *before* them. This would be to make it no reward at all, whereas he now, very naturally, aſks for that reward which had been promiſed to him when he

ſhould

ſhould have fulfilled the conditions on which the promiſe was made.

8. Having ſaid before in general, that he had finiſhed the work which God had given him to do, he here ſpecifies what that work was, viz. to convince his diſciples of his divine miſſion, and to preſerve them in the practice of virtue.

9. i. e. Not at this time. But indeed this very prayer does in reality reſpect the whole world, as its converſion and ſalvation by the miniſtry of the apoſtles, and their ſucceſſors in preaching the goſpel, which was the great object of his miſſion, is alluded to in it.

11, 12, Here Jeſus, in effect, prays for the deſcent of the ſpirit to take his place, and to do for his diſciples what he had done for them while he was with them; and this was evidently no other than the power of God the Father himſelf, and not a perſon diſtinct from him. For nothing elſe can be the proper interpretation of his language here, *keep through thine own name those which thou haſt given me*, that is keep them by thy own immediate power.

13. Inſtead of *my joy*, Mr. W. renders it, *their joy in me*. W.

18. We ſee here, as I have obſerved before, what is the meaning of the term *world*, as denoting the place into which Chriſt was ſent. It was not the material world, but the world in a figurative tho' by no means an uncommon ſenſe, as a ſcene of trial and activity. In this ſenſe the apoſtles were not at that time ſent into the world, tho' they were then living, and therefore in the literal ſenſe, in the world as well as Jeſus himſelf.

21. *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and that the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.* MARKLAND.

22 What can be more evident from this paſſage than that Chriſt is one with the Father in no other ſenſe than that in which all his diſciples are one with them both, that is, one by affection and intereſt and by no means in nature.

In this prayer we perceive a great reſemblance to what was to be performed by the high prieſt of the Jews at the great day of atonement, when he was to make atonement firſt for himſelf, then for the prieſts, and after that for the people, Lev. xvi. 6—17. So our Lord here prays firſt for himſelf, then for his apoſtles, and laſtly for the whole church, and chriſtians of every ſucceeding age.

PARAPHRASE.

John XVII. 1. When Jeſus had ſaid what he thought proper to his diſciples, he directed his eyes upwards and in their hearing, addreſſed his heavenly Father, in the following manner, Father, the time of the completion of my public miniſtry here below is now at hand. I therefore pray that thou wouldſt advance me from a ſtate of humiliation and ſufferings, to a ſtate of glory and happineſs, that I may ſtill carry on thy great and gracious deſigns in that ſtate, as I have done in this; 2. and that, as I have here delivered unto men the precepts and doctrines which thou gaveſt me, to engage them in the practice of virtue, and obedience to thy

will

will, I may there be enabled to confer upon them thoſe rewards, which it is thy good pleaſure that they ſhould receive; and which is the great object and end of the powers with which thou haſt entruſted me; viz. to give eternal life to all thoſe whom thou, in thy wiſe providence, haſt thought proper ſhould become my diſciples. 3. And the greateſt advantage which they would enjoy in this eternal life and happineſs, as well as the only neceſſary means to qualify them for it, is the juſt knowledge of thee, as the only living and true God, and of myſelf as the Meſſiah, with ſentiments and conduct ſuited to that knowledge.

4. Since now, O Father, I have promoted thy glory on earth, and have finiſhed the work which thou giveſt me to do, 5. Exalt me, I intreat thee, to thy right hand, which is the ſtate of glory that thou hadſt appointed for me before the world was. 6. I have communicated thy will to all thoſe whom thou haſt given to be my diſciples, and they have kept it. 7. They are ſatisfied that all the power that I now exerciſe has been given to me by thee; 8 and they have received the inſtructions that I have given them as thine, and they are fully convinced of my miſſion from thee. 9. It is for my diſciples only, and not for the world at large that I now pray. It is for thoſe who are in a more eſpecial manner, thy own. 10. For it is thy pleaſure that as every thing that is mine comes from thee, ſo all that is thine, reſpecting the kingdom of truth and righteouſneſs on earth, ſhould be mine, and at my diſpoſal. And this is the greateſt honour that I could receive,

11: I am now coming to thee, and to leave them expoſed to all the ſnares and dangers of the world; do thou thyſelf vouchſafe to undertake the care of them whom thou haſt given me, that they may continue united to us in the ſame bond of affection with which thou, O Father, and myſelf, are united. 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in their duty to thee; even all that thou gaveſt to be my followers, except one reprobate; and it was neceſſary for the fulfilment of the ſcriptures that one of them ſhould be a traitor.

13. Now that I am about to leave the world, I addreſs myſelf to thee in this manner, in their hearing, that I may inſpire them with that inward joy and ſatisfaction that I myſelf have always experienced. 14. I am the more concerned for their ſafety, as, in conſequence of my having inſtructed them in thy will, the world has become alienated from them: for, indeed, their views and expectations are not from this world, any more than my own have been.

15. I do not pray that they may follow me immediately, and that thou wouldſt at this time take them out of this world, but that thou wouldſt keep them out of the evil to which they are expoſed in it. 16. Even, from thoſe temptations and trials to which they will neceſſarily be expoſed, in conſequence of their not being conformed to the manners and vices of the world, any more than myſelf. 17. May their minds be thoroughly ſeaſoned and fortified by a firm belief of the great truths which they are to teach to others, and be thus conſecrated and ſet apart for the office of the apoſtleſhip. 18.

For

18. For as thou haſt ſent me into the world, ſo do I ſend them on the ſame miſſion. 19. For my miſſion is only introductory to theirs; and it is for their ſakes, and with a view to their future ſervices, chiefly, that I have devoted myſelf to the work of preaching the goſpel.

20. Neither do I now pray for theſe my apoſtles only, who are now preſent with me, but for all that ſhall be converted to the chriſtian religion through their preaching, even all thoſe who, to the end of the world, ſhall become my diſciples. 21. That they may all form one connected compact body, by an union as intimate as that which ſubſiſts between thee and me, that they all may be one with us, and that the whole world, ſeeing the good effects of this divine harmony, may be convinced of my divine miſſion.

22. As they are one with me in affection and deſign, I am alſo deſirous that they ſhould ſhare with me in the glory which thou giveſt me; that in this reſpect alſo they may be one with us, as thou and myſelf art one; (23.) I being conſidered as dwelling in them, and thou in me, that their union with us may be compleated, and that all the world may be convinced that thou haſt ſent me, and that thou wilt love and honour them, even as thou haſt loved and honoured me.

24. It is my final wiſh, that all my faithful followers may enjoy my preſence hereafter, and may behold and ſhare in the glory which thou giveſt me, and which thou haſt deſigned for me from the foundation of the world. 25. In this, O Father, thou wilt ſhew thyſelf to be juſt and righteous, in diſtinguiſhing by thy ſpecial favour

myſelf and them who know and acknowledge thee, and have devoted ourſelves wholly to thy will, while the world at large has been alienated from thee. 26. And the reaſon why I have inculcated upon them the true knowledge of thee, and entire obedience to thee, and that I ſhall ſtill continue to do ſo by the Holy Spirit, after my reſurrection, has been that they may partake of the love wherewith thou haſt loved me, and be conſidered by thee as if I myſelf was in and with them.

SECTION LXXXIII.

The Agony in the Garden and the apprehending of Jeſus.

Matt. XXVI. 36——56. Mark XIV. 32——52. Luke XXII. 40——53. John XVIII. 1——11.

JESUS having delivered that affectionate prayer of which we have an account in the goſpel of John, who, as well as the reſt of the apoſtles, was preſent on the occaſion, croſſed the brook Cedron, which ſeparated Jeruſalem from the mount of Olives, to go to a garden, which was the ſcene of the following moſt intereſting tranſaction.

Matt. XXVI. 36. This was probably a garden belonging to ſomefriend of Jeſus, into which he had leave to enter whenever he pleaſed.

37. Peter, James and John had attended Jeſus when he raiſed the daughter of Jairus, and alſo on the mount of transfiguration; ſo that the ſame perſons here

law

ſaw him in a ſtate of the loweſt humiliation, who had before ſeen a ſpecimen of his future glory.

The words in the original expreſs the greateſt poſſible dejection and conſternation of mind. It may ſeem extraordinary that Jeſus, who afterwards bore his ſufferings with ſo much compoſure, ſhould be ſo exceedingly affected by the idea of them only. But it is no uncommon thing, when we have a clear idea of any future pains, to imagine them to be greater and more intolerable than we afterwards find them to be, death itſelf, in any form, I believe not excepted. Many perſons, for example, bear the amputation of a limb with a good deal of courage, who have paſſed many a ſleepleſs hour of the night in thinking of the operation before hand.

Beſides the caſe of Jeſus was peculiar. He not only knew that he muſt die a violent death in general, but likewiſe all the circumſtances attending it, which would make his idea of it much more diſtinct, vivid, and affecting. If a man ſhould only know that he was to die in battle, for example, his idea of his death being general and indiſtinct, would not impreſs his mind ſo much as if he had a previous knowledge of every wound that he ſhould receive, and the time that he was to languiſh under the painful effects of them.

Now, it might be of great conſequence that Jeſus ſhould have had a diſtinct idea of his future ſufferings. This circumſtance both argued his greater reſignation to the will of God in ſubmitting to them, and would likewiſe tend to give him the fulleſt conviction, when he ſaw every particular event in the courſe of his ſuf-

ſerings exactly anſwering the idea that had been given him of them, that the great cataſtrophe, viz. his riſing from the dead, and his future glory, would be the certain iſſue of the whole, and therefore would tend to encourage, rather than diſcourage him.

38. Luke ſays that *his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.* But it does not follow that he conſidered the drops of ſweat as actually conſiſting of blood, but only as large, and viſible, as drops of blood would be. There are, however, ſeveral examples of perſons actually ſweating blood through great terror of mind; and therefore I rather think that this was the caſe with Jeſus. And it is a proof both of the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility of his mind, and of his entire reſignation to the will of God. Notwithſtanding his natural exceſſive dread of death and torture, he could ſtill ſay, *Not my will, but thine be done.*

39. *This cup*:] meaning his approaching ſufferings. He felt as a man, but immediately ſubmitted his will to the will of God; *nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

We cannot ſuppoſe that Jeſus really expected, or wiſhed to be excuſed from his approaching ſufferings. Tho' the form of the expreſſion be different, yet what he ſays here amounts to nothing more than he had ſaid on a former occaſion, a day or two before, when he was likewiſe much oppreſſed with the proſpect of them. *Now, says he,* John xii. 27, *is my ſoul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay, Father ſave me from this hour, but for this cauſe came I unto this hour, Father glorify thy name.*

name. The ſtate of his mind was evidently the ſame on both theſe occaſions.

40. Luke ſays that they *ſlept through ſorrow*, and on the mount of transfiguration they ſlept through *aſtoniſhment.* This was quite natural. For after any great exertion, occaſioned by terror or anxiety, the mind will have reſt. We read of perſons in long and extreme torture having momentary intervals of ſound ſleep.

41. There is great tenderneſs in this reproof, eſpecially conſidering the anxiety of Jeſus's own mind, and his want of ſufficient ſympathy from his friends; and this makes it the more probable that their ſleep was not the effect of natural drowſineſs, but was brought on by uncommon exertion of mind and ſtrong feelings, tho' not equal to his own, which, no doubt, would have prevented ſleep.

46. It has been imagined by ſome, that this agony of Jeſus in the garden was occaſioned by Jeſus then bearing the puniſhment due to the ſins of men. But the evangeliſts ſay nothing about any ſuch thing. So far was Chriſt from being the object of divine *wrath*, or a proper ſubject of *puniſhment*, that he muſt have been the object of his peculiar complaiſance in his patient ſubmiſſion to his will. His agony, great as it was, is ſufficiently accounted for by the near view of his approaching painful and ignominious death.

49. *Kiſſed him.*] The word καταφιλεω, ſignifies to kiſs with ardour and affection.

52. *They that take the ſword ſhall perish with the ſword.*] This prophecy ſeems to have been verified

whenever chriſtians have had recourſe to arms, in order to defend themſelves from perſecution; as in the caſe of the Huſſites in Bohemia, and the Huguenots in France.

Mark XIV. 41. For it is *enough*, read *It is done*, or *is over.*

51. *A certain young man*] Probably ſome perſon who lived near the garden, and was awakened by the tumult. Whether he was a friend of Jeſus, or not, does not appear. But it looks as if thoſe who ſeized Jeſus had orders to ſeize his followers, and this perſon might have been taken for one of them. This accounts for the diſperſion of the diſciples; and probably they were ſaved by the interpoſition of Jeſus in their favour, when he ſaid, *If ye want me let these go their way.* The *manner* he ſpake theſe words might enforce their obedience.

It is cuſtomary, ſays Dr. Shaw, in the Eaſt, to wear a kind of blanket, called a *Hyke*, wrapped about them, which is all that many perſons wear by day, and ſleep in at night. In ſummer they have them of cotton, or linen. To run away quite *naked*, as this young man ſeems to have done, argues extreme fear; for to be ſeen naked is more ſhameful in the Eaſt than it is here.

Luke XXII. 44. *As it were great drops of blood.*] There are ſeveral inſtances of perſons, in great agony of mind, ſweating blood. See *Theological Repository*, Vol. III. p. 376.

51. *Touched his ear.*] Pearce thinks it very improbable that our Lord ſhould have wrought a miracle on this

this occaſion, and there is no mention of it in the other evangeliſts, who ſpeak of the cutting off of the ear.

Suffer ye thus far.] Pearce would render it, *Suffer* (i. e. me, to go) *as far as this man, or this place*; meaning to go to the wounded man to heal him.

John. XVIII. 6. Perhaps impreſſed with extraordinary terror. The whole ſhews that Jeſus might eaſily have made his eſcape, if he had been diſpoſed to do it.

11. Other accounts ſay that Jeſus healed the ſervant's ear, which ſhews his perfect compoſure, and how far he was from entertaining any thoughts of revenge.

SECTION LXXXIV.

Jesus tried before the High Priest. Peter denies him. Judas hangs himself.

Matt XXVI. 57——75. 27. 1——10. Mark XIV. 53——72. Luke XXII. 54——71. John XVIII. 12——27.

WE have lately been attending to the remarkable ſcene of our Saviour's agony in the garden; a moſt intereſting and affecting ſcene no doubt, but not at all difficult to account for on the ſuppoſition of his being a man like ourſelves, and of his feeling as other good men would do in his peculiarly trying circumſtances, with a diſtinct foreſight of all that was to befal him,

That Jesus attended only to himself upon this occasion, is evident from the language he uses, *Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* There is no appearance, therefore, of his having any thing to do with the sins of men, and suffering on their account.

We have likewise seen how Jesus was betrayed by Judas, and apprehended by the officers of the high priest, after giving such proofs of his power, as sufficiently shewed that his submission to them was voluntary. That it was in his power to have rescued himself, appeared by the falling down to the ground of the very persons into whose hands he delivered himself. His healing the ear of the person whom Peter had smitten, shewed his perfect freedom from malice or revenge, and likewise the composure of his mind, which was likewise evident by his providing for the safety of his apostles. For it is most probable that the officers were sent to apprehend them all.

John XVIII. 13. This Annas, tho' not the high priest, had been in that office, and he seems to have had great influence in all affairs of moment, being the same that is called *Ananus* in Josephus, the Jewish historian of those times. From the house of Annas he was led to that of Caiaphas, before whom he was publicly tried in the court of Sanhedrim, which was probably held in the precincts of the temple. But tho' sentence of death was there pronounced against him, it could not be ratified but by the Roman governor, before whom they afterwards brought him.

15 Tho'

15. Tho' Peter fled with the reſt of the apoſtles, yet his affection for his maſter, and his anxiety for the event, led him to venture where he might be ſooneſt informed of the iſſue. The other diſciple was probably John himſelf.

17. It may be obſerved, in apology for Peter, that he was taken by ſurprize, and that he had more reaſon for fear than any other of the apoſtles, on account of his having attempted to reſcue his maſter by force, and having actually ſtruck the high prieſt's ſervant. His repentance alſo was ſpeedy, and ſevere.

22. There was nothing in our Saviour's reply but what was juſt and manly, challenging his adverſaries to prove his guilt; and nothing but a perſuaſion that this outrage would not offend the court can account for any ſervant of it uſing ſuch inſolence. This proves the violence and injuſtice with which all the proceedings againſt Jeſus were conducted.

Matt. XXVI. 62. Nothing could be more impertinent than ſuch a charge as this, and therefore there was no apparent reaſon for Jeſus making any defence; and in fact, as no uſe could be made of it, it was not inſiſted upon. Accordingly, they proceed to the true cauſe of all their violence againſt him, by putting him upon his ſolemn oath, to ſay whether he was the Meſſiah, or not. His acting in ſome reſpects as the Meſſiah, his never diſclaiming that title, and yet his not aſſuming what was thought his proper character, viz. that of a prince, and his declared oppoſition to themſelves, were the true cauſes of the umbrage which they took at him.

64 This

64. This may be rendered *immediately*, or *soon*, but the real meaning may be that it will *certainly* take place. W.

65. Upon ſeveral occaſions the high prieſt was expreſsly forbidden to tear his cloaths, which other Jews did in caſes of great grief, or conſternation.

Blasphemy; means ſomething arrogant and inſulting with reſpect to God.

67. Spitting on the face was the greateſt expreſſion of hatred and deteſtation.

68. This was in ridicule of the character of Jeſus as a *prophet*. The word in the original denotes *rude and violent blows*, ſuch as occaſion great pain and bruiſing.

Matt. XXVII. 2. From thisl great council of the nation, which was in the precincts of the temple, Jeſus was ſent bound to Pilate, who was at that time at Jeruſalem, being the paſſover. For at all the great feſtivals the Roman Governor came to Jeruſalem, that by his preſence he might prevent any tumult or ſedition, his uſual reſidence being at Cæſarea.

3. *Then Judas*, &c.] See a very probable account of this tranſaction, *Theological Repository*, Vol. I. p. 63.

5. The repentance of Judas, eſpecially attended with ſuch bitter remorſe as induced him to lay violent hands upon himſelf, is a moſt convincing evidence of the perfect innocence of Jeſus; as he had the ſame opportunity of obſerving his maſter's conduct with the other apoſtles. Nay, being the purſe bearer to the company, he may be very well thought to have had a better opportunity

opportunity than any of them, of knowing whether his maſter had any mercenary deſign.

9. *Jeremy the prophet.*] Pearce thinks that Matthew only wrote *the prophet*, without naming any one, and that *Jeremy* got into the text very early, by miſtake for *Zachariah*, whoſe the words are, Zach. xi, 12, 13. However Mr. Mede and Biſhop Kidder ſay that the ſix laſt chapters of Zachariah were originally in Jeremiah.

Mark XIV. 56. The word ισαι properly means that the evidence was not *adequate to the purpose for which it was produced*, that is, not ſufficient to condemn him to death.

72. The word επιβαλων may perhaps mean that he covered his face with his garments.

Luke XXII. 61. *Turned, and looked.*] Pearce obſerves that, from the accounts of Matthew and Mark, Jeſus was not in the ſame room with Peter; for that Jeſus was in the houſe of the high prieſt, and Peter only in the porch of the hall, which was beneath, and theſe evangeliſts only ſay that *Peter remembered, and called to mind the words of Jesus.*

68. *And if I also ask you.*] If I ſhould argue the matter with you, putting queſtions to you, according to the cuſtom of diſputations in antient times, as we ſee in Socrates.

You would not answer me,] i. e. You would not diſcuſs the matter fairly.

John XVIII. 15. *Another disciple;*] meaning probably, John himſelf.

18. *A fire*,] Probably a pan of charcoal, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſt in great houſes. *Harmer's Obſervations on Travels into the Eaſt*, Vol. VI. p. 218.

The fate of Judas is related with ſome different circumſtances by the apoſtle Peter in the book of Acts, i, 18, &c. An ingenious friend of mine conjectures that the two accounts may be reconciled in the following manner. The court in which the council was aſſembled adjoined to the temple, and Judas from the intereſt he could not help taking in the affair, was attending without; and as ſoon as he found that his maſter was condemned to die, and that he made no attempt to reſcue himſelf, he was filled with the keeneſt remorſe, having before perhaps had no diſtinct idea of the iſſue and progreſs of the buſineſs. And indeed things appear in a very different light to men when they are full of reſentment, and after that reſentment is ſatiated by having gained their purpoſe. In this ſtate of mind he went into the open court before the members had diſmiſſed themſelves, and returned the money which he had received as the price of his treachery, and it being early in the morning perhaps before day light, he hanged himſelf on the baluſtrades of the temple, or ſomewhere within the court. But, being quickly found, he was, in order to get rid of the body in the quickeſt manner, thrown over the wall, into the deep valley which ſeparates the temple from the mount of Olives. Or he might be found hanging over the precipice, and be cut down as he hung. Thus the fact would be as generally known as any thing well could be; and in the eye of

of providence it was of importance that his death and the manner of it ſhould not be concealed. As to Judas's buying the field himſelf, or the high prieſt buying it with his money, it amounts to the ſame thing.

The guilt of Judas was certainly very great. Jeſus himſelf aſſerted it when he ſaid, that *it would have been better for him if he had never been born.* It is poſſible, however, that there may be, and indeed I have no doubt there are, many perſons of worſe characters than Judas, and therefore who will have greater condemnation. We may eaſily conceive the caſe of Judas to have been worſe than it was. For example, he would have been a worſe man if he had felt no remorſe, if he had not repented at all, but had been capable of enjoying the reward of his perfidy; and if, inſtead of deſtroying himſelf, he had become an oppoſer of chriſtianity, and a perſecutor of his brethren.

I doubt not but that many of the Scribes and Phariſees were men of more obdurate minds, and more unrelenting malice, than Judas. I do not advance theſe things to leſſen the crime of Judas, but only to enable you to form a juſt idea of it.

On the other hand, it may perhaps be ſaid with truth that no perſon who had had the advantages which Judas had, of an intimate ſociety with Jeſus, and beginning, as he muſt have done, with a tolerable fair character, was capable of proceeding farther in wickedneſs than he did. But, upon the whole, it is evident that he acted more from reſentment, than any fixed principle.

10. The paſſage alluded to is in Zechariah, and not in Jeremiah, and it is propable that originally it was only

in the prophet, without the mention of any particular prophet, as it now is in the very antient Syriac verſion. There, however, it is certainly no prophecy concerning Chriſt; but it contains circumſtances ſimilar enough to thoſe in his ſituation. The prophet was directed to aſk the rulers of the Jews at what price they valued his labours, as a watchman or ſhepherd over them, and they, in contempt, anſwered *thirty pieces of ſilver*, which was the uſual price of a ſlave, and this ſum God directed him to give to a potter. The life of Jeſus being valued at the ſame price, and that ſum being given for the purchaſe of a field called the *potter's field*, was ſufficient to ſtrike the mind of the evangeliſt, as a remarkable coincidence of circumſtances in the two caſes. It may ſeem extraordinary that any piece of ground, deſerving the name of *a field*, ſo near to Jeruſalem, ſhould be ſold ſo cheap. But beſides being very ſmall, as it muſt have been to be employed for the purpoſe of a burying ground, it might have been ſo dug up for the uſe of the potters, as to be unfit for any other purpoſe.

PARAPHRASE.

Matthew XXVI. 64. Jeſus ſaid, I am indeed the Chriſt, and notwithſtanding my preſent ſtate of humiliation, you ſhall ſee verified in me all, and more than you have been taught to expect concerning the Meſſiah, but which you improperly look for at preſent, namely, that I ſhould appear ſitting at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

SEC.

SECTION LXXXV.

Jesus insulted by Herod, and condemned by Pilate.

Matt. XXVII. 11——26. Mark XV. 1——15. Luke XXIII. 1——25. John XVII. 28——40.

WE have seen with what wonderful composure and propriety Jesus behaved on his trial before the high priest, and perhaps on no trial whatever were there more apparent marks of partiality and malice, the judges being evidently predetermined at all events, to have their revenge. They were not provided with a specific charge of any thing that could be deemed *capital*; and when two witnesses, which the law required, appeared, it was only to charge him with saying that *if the temple was destroyed he could build it again in three days*, an accusation so extremely frivolous, and so little to the purpose, that the judges themselves made no use of it. They therefore charged him upon his oath to tell them whether he was the Messiah or not. Being adjured in this solemn manner, he, with equal solemnity declared that *he was*; and moreover informed them that, hereafter they should see the very sign which themselves deemed to be characteristic of the Messiah, namely the *sign from heaven*, mentioned in the prophet Daniel. *Hereafter*, says he; *ye shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*. On this his own confession they condemned him

to death as a *blasphemer*; it being deemed *blasphemy* to pretend to be a prophet when a man was not really ſo, notwithſtanding Jeſus had given abundant proof of his divine miſſion. Having now condemned him to death in their own courts on one pretence, they bring him before Pilate on another, different at leaſt in form, and better adapted to gain their purpoſe with the Romans.

John XVIII.28. *The Jews* had eaten the paſſover the preceding evening. But as the whole feſtival continued ſeven days, it is probable that by the phraſe *eating the paſſover*, the evangeliſt meant keeping the paſſover in general, or that feaſt of which this was the principal part, and to which it gave its name.

As the Jews ſcrupled going into the houſe of a Gentile on any public ſolemnity, it appears that the Roman governor when at Jeruſalem held his tribunal in the open air; probably in the court of the houſe appropriated to his reſidence, which was not far from the temple. Indeed, it was uſual with the ancients to hold their courts of juſtice in the open air, no inconvenience attending this in a warm climate.

Among other ſuperſtitions in the inſtitutions of Moſes, impurity was thought to be contracted by touching a heathen.

31. *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*] The Jews were then ſubject to the Romans, who adminiſtered the civil government by their own officers, not leaving to the Jews the power of life and death; a full proof that the ſceptr was effectually departed from Judah, which was to take place before the coming

coming of the Messiah, and which never had been the case with the Jews before *in their own country*, though they had been subject both to the Persians and Macedonians.

32 *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.*] On several occasions our Lord, speaking of his death, had alluded to this particular manner of it, viz. crucifixion, which was a punishment peculiar to the Romans. Thus he says, John xii 32, *If I be lifted up from the earth*, John iii. 14, *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up.*

33. Luke states the accusation more formally and distinctly as follows, Ch. xxiii, 2. *We found this man perverting the nation, and forbidding to give credit to Cæsar, saying that he himself was Christ a king.* Now it does not appear that they were able to give any proof of Jesus having forbidden to pay tribute. They produced no witnesses of this; and their accusing him of pretending to be *a king*, was only their own construction of his late declaration, that he was the Messiah. For in their idea the Messiah was to be a king, and release them from all foreign subjection.

36. *My kingdom is not of this world.*) Jesus did not deny either that he was a king, or the king of the Jews; but only asserted that his kingdom was of such a nature as not to interfere with any of the kingdoms of this world, and therefore did not need to give umbrage to the Romans.

38. *What is truth?*) Very probably Jesus made a pause, and did not answer immediately; or Pilate, re-

collecting that the queſtion had nothing to do with the buſineſs of the trial, might not wait for any anſwer.

Luke *XXIII. 5.* Here again the charge is general and indiſtinct. It is certain that Jeſus had *taught the people* in the manner that they deſcribe. But the proper queſtion was, *what had he taught?*

7. This was evidently a deſign to get rid of the buſineſs; for Pilate clearly perceived the malice of the Jews in it, and he was not diſpoſed to gratify them; not from any love of juſtice, for we ſhall find that he was not inflexible in that reſpect, but he had no motive of prejudice againſt Jeſus, but rather againſt his enemies, with whom he was at variance. At the ſame time he probably gave his conduct an air of compliment to Herod, who appears to have taken it in this light.

8. Herod was a man of pleaſure, but a Jew, and therefore a believer in miracles. He had been much ſtruck with the preaching of John, and for ſome time imagined that Jeſus was the ſame perſon *raiſed from* the dead. It is probable he had never ſeen Jeſus before, though he had heard much of him, and of his miracles.

9. We are not told what theſe accuſations were, but they amounted to nothing that Jeſus thought neceſſary to reply to, and indeed nothing that Herod himſelf thought to be of any importance, or at leaſt ſufficiently proved.

11. As nothing was proved againſt Jeſus, it was a criminal and baſe compliance to a clamorous multitude to inſult him in this manner.

15 Nothing

15. Nothing worthy of death has been done *by* him. W.

16. This propoſal to *chaſtiſe* Jeſus, by which was meant a moſt cruel *ſcourging*, was manifeſtly unjuſt, and could only be intended to pacify the Jews, who were clamorous for a greater puniſhment.

Matt. XXVII. 17. This appears to have been grown into an eſtabliſhed cuſtom, which no governor thought himſelf at liberty to depart from.

20. Such was the influence that the Phariſees had over the Jewiſh populace, that Joſephus ſays, whatever they ſaid, even againſt the emperor, or the high prieſt himſelf, was inſtantly credited by them. Ant. lib. 13. c. 10. v. 75.

25. It is remarkable in how ſimple and diſpaſſionate a manner the evangeliſts relate the particulars of this moſt intereſting tranſaction. Here are no encomiums on Jeſus or his conduct, and no reflections on his adverſaries; but the *facts* are ſuch that it is impoſſible not to ſee in them, what all the characters really were. It is impoſſible not to perceive the extreme injuſtice and violence of the enemies of Jeſus, who could make ſo light of the crimes of ſedition and murder, when blinded by their envy, jealouſy, and revenge.

26. *Had ſcourged him.*) The Romans uſed to whip or ſcourge thoſe who were to be crucified; and the whole was generally done with every mark of inſult and ridicule, as well as of cruelty; this being the puniſhment of the vileſt ſlaves, and the moſt deteſted criminals.

From the circumſtances before us it is evident that Jeſus and his miracles had been far from paſſing without the notice of the principal people among the Jews. of which unbelievers at this day would be glad to avail themſelves. It is plain, from this rage and malice of his enemies, that he had been obſerved with the moſt jealous attention, and that no mark of impoſture, no falſe pretence to a power of working miracles, could be alledged againſt him. Nothing of this appears in in the courſe of his trial, either before the high prieſt, or before Pilate, and his *miracles* had been more public than his *teaching*, of which they do make mention.

PARAPHRASE.

John *XVIII. 37.* For this end was I born, and have received my commiſſion from God, viz. to bear witneſs to all important truth, and eſpecially this concerning which thou aſkeſt me: for indeed I am a king, though not ſuch a king as I am accuſed of pretending to be. This I ſay is a great truth, and all who are candid and love the truth, have had evidence enough of it.

SEC-

SECTION LXXXVI.

Jesus secured and led to Crucifixion.

Matt. XXVII. 27——32. Mark XV. 16——21. Luke XXIII. 26——32. John XIX. 1——17.

WE have seen with what reluctance Pilate was prevailed upon to pass sentence of death upon Jesus. He repeatedly acknowledged that he saw no cause of death in him, and therefore, had he been an upright man, and a good magistrate, he would not, upon any consideration, have consented to it. There was no accusation brought against him, supported by any proper evidence, that could affect his life. As to what they *did* alledge against him, as having *perverted the people, and forbidden to pay tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself was a king*, Pilate, seeing no evidence of it, but clearly perceiving the prejudice and malice with which the prosecution was carried on, paid no regard to it, and Jesus, with great propriety and dignity, made no defence, when there was no proper charge against him, and no witnesses to confront him. He always, however, replied to every thing that was material, and his just discrimination in this respect, shews that he was under no consternation, but perfectly master of himself.

When Pilate repeatedly urged him to say whether he was *a king*, he did not deny it; but, that he might

not be miſled by the word, he added, that his kingdom was ſuch that the powers of this world did not need to take umbrage at it, not being *a kingdom of this world.* But as far as the charge was in any ſenſe true, he who *came to bear witneſs of the truth*, would acknowledge it. Notwithſtanding this, ſome of the common people, inſtigated by the chief prieſts, and ſeeing no proſpect of his aſſuming the character out of reſpect to which alone they were attached to him, were clamorous for his crucifixion, and demanded Barabbas, a robber and murderer, to be ſet at liberty rather than him. For Pilate, when he could not prevail upon them to releaſe him as an innocent perſon, would have diſmiſſed him as a pardoned criminal.

There is no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the great body of the Jewiſh people demanded the death of Jeſus, much leſs that they would have deliberately voted his deſtruction, if it had been ſeriouſly propoſed to them. Many circumſtances render this ſuppoſition highly improbable. It is well known how a few clamorous perſons have the moſt deciſive influence in the proceedings of the mob, and how great multitudes are often intimated by the noiſe of a few, when thoſe few come prepared for any particular purpoſe, and have laid their plan, while the reſt are taken by ſurprize. This was the caſe here. The enemies of Jeſus among the chief prieſts might bring their ſervants and dependants, and preſently fill the chief places in any court of Juſtice, while the friends of Jeſus, ſuſpecting nothing of the matter, and many of them being intimidated, would not make any effectual oppoſition. Beſides the whole was tranſacted early

in

in the morning and probably in little more than an hour; and after Jesus was delivered to a company of Roman soldiers for immediate execution, any attempt to rescue him would have come too late; not to say that many, who had seen his miracles, would naturally think, that if he thought proper, he was able to rescue himself.

Another circumstance that Matthew mentions, which made Pilate more backward to pass sentence of death upon Jesus, was a message from his wife, who had had an extraordinary dream, which made her uneasy on his account, and the heathens in general were extremely superstitious with respect to dreams. Whether this dream was miraculous, or not, does not appear.

Matt. XXVII. 29. *A Crown of thorns.*] Ακανθων This may signify a crown made of the herb *acanthus* or *bearsfoot*, which is not thorny, but soft and smooth; and this herb is said to be very common in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Pearce also remarks that he does not find it mentioned by any of the primitive christians as an instance of *cruelty* used towards our Saviour, till the times of Tertullian, who lived near two centuries after Christ. As the reed put into the hand of Jesus was only intended to mock him, it is probable that the crown was a circumstance of the same nature.

John XIX. 1. This was a cruel beating, such as is generally used in discipline of the army with us. But persons sentenced to be crucified, being generally the lowest of criminals, were treated with every mark of cruelty and insult.

5. Thinking perhaps to move their compaſſion, or that their rage would be ſatisfied by ſeeing what he had already ſuffered, appearing, no doubt, very bloody after the cruel ſcourging.

6. It is evident they were not at all moved by this ſad ſpectacle.

7. Here the term *Son of God* is used as ſynonymous to *the Meſſiah*. It was for aſſuming this character that he had been ſentenced to death by the Jewiſh Sanhedrim. The *law* that is here referred to, if it was a law of Moſes, could only be that which appoints blaſphemers to be ſtoned; and the Jews would probably conſider any man as a blaſphemer, who pretended to have a commiſſion from God, when in their opinion he had none.

8. Pilate, having probably heard of the miracles of Jeſus, and not knowing what truth there might be in them, would naturally ſuſpect that there might be ſomething extraordinary in his caſe; and therefore that ſome judgment might befal himſelf for conſenting to his his death; there being many examples in the heathen mythology of perſons who were ſeverely puniſhed for inſults on their Gods, or the deſcendants and favourites of their gods.

9. i. e. Who art thou, and what are thy pretenſions? But to this he made no anſwer. He had ſufficiently anſwered to every proper queſtion, or whenever there was any accuſation proper to reply to. But there was great dignity and propriety, in his not anſwering to any thing elſe, eſpecially now that they had already began to beat him as a criminal, tho' they had not proved him

to

to be guilty of any crime. He had no favour to ask. He knew that his death was determined, and therefore he calmly ſubmitted to the malice of his enemies, and the will of God.

11. This was the language of a man perfectly conſcious of his innocence, and there was probably ſomething in the manner of it that ſtruck Pilate very forcibly.

Except it were given thee from above.] Some ſuppoſe that this refers to the Roman emperor. If ſo, the meaning will be, As you are only the emperor's deputy, and therefore obliged to take cognizance of ſuch perſons as are brought before you, they who have unjuſtly accuſed me to you are more guilty than you. But I think that ανωθεν means from God, and therefore that the Jews who had ſeen the miracles which he did by the power of God, and not only knew his *innocence*, but ought to have diſtinguiſhed and acknowledged his *divine miſſion*, were much more guilty than Pilate, who was a ſtranger both to the ſcriptures, and moſt of the particulars of Jeſus's life.

12. From thenceforth. This may be rendered *upon this*, or as *on this account*.

14. This was probably ſaid by way of inſult to the Jews, with whom he was diſpleaſed. The *ſixth hour* in our preſent copies was probably the miſtake of ſome early tranſcriber. For from the accounts of the other evangeliſts, and many circumſtances, it muſt have been about the *third hour*, or our nine in the morning.

The word *paſſover* has been inſerted here through ignorance. MANN. *Bowyer*.

15 This

15. This explicit acknowledgment of perfect ſubjection to the Romans, muſt have been mortifying to the Jews, and ſome cauſe of triumph to Pilate, who knew their refractory diſpoſition.

Matt. XXVII. 32. It is probable that, according to the cuſtom on theſe occaſions, they gave Jeſus the transverſe piece of wood belonging to the croſs to carry to the place of execution; but probably perceiving him to be much exhauſted, and unable to bear it, at leaſt the whole way, which was about a mile, or a mile and a half, they gave it to another perſon to carry it for him.

Luke XXIII. 28. It is remarkable that after his agony in the garden, Jeſus never expreſſed the leaſt concern for himſelf, or any dread of his ſufferings. But it is obſervable that all evils, and death itſelf, appear moſt terrible at ſome diſtance; and after Jeſus had given full vent to his own fears and apprehenſions, his mind was perfectly compoſed, and occupied by other conſiderations.

30. This was a proverbial expreſſion, denoting the greateſt conſternation.

John XIX. 17. This place was a little without the walls of the city, tho, it was now incloſed within them. It was not uſual with the Jews to execute within any city.

We ſee here that it was the cuſtom with the Romans, as with the ancients in general, to carry the ſentence of their laws into immediate execution. No ſooner was ſentence of death pronounced upon Jeſus, but, without ſending him to priſon, he was immediately conducted

conducted to the place of crucifixion. It would be wiſe in us to adopt this policy, as it would add greatly to the dread of puniſhment, and conſequently contribute much to the prevention of crimes. The reaſon alleged for our delay of execution, viz. to give the criminal time to repent, and make his peace with God, is founded on ſuperſtition, deluſive with reſpect to the ſufferer, and of bad example to others.

It may be proper to mention in this place, that Pilate, who, to ingratiate himſelf with the Jews, acted contrary to his judgment, in conſenting to the death of an innocent perſon, did not gain his ends by it; being ſometime afterwards accuſed to the emperor of maladminiſtration, in conſequence of which he was baniſhed into Gaul, where it is ſaid that he put an end to his own life.

PARAPHRASE.

John XIX. 11. Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldſt have had no power againſt me at all, if it had not been given to thee from God, who, in his great wiſdom, has appointed that I ſhould ſuffer death. With reſpect to thee, I am ſimply an innocent man, whom thou oughteſt not to condemn; but the Jews who have delivered me into thy hands, have had ſufficient opportunity of knowing much more of me than mere innocence; they have perſecuted to death one whom they might have known to be a prophet, and even their Meſſiah. They, therefore, have much greater guilt than thou haſt.

Luke XXIII. 31. If divine providence, for wiſe ends, permits this ſuffering to befal me, who am an innocent

nocent perſon; ſo that there is no more apparent propriety in my being abandoned to this fate, than to make fuel of green wood, what will be done to you whoſe vices render you as ripe for deſtruction as dry wood is fit for burning?

SECTION LXXXVII.

The Crucifixion of Jeſus.

Matt. XXVII. 33——50. Mark XV. 22——37. Luke XXIII. 33——44, 46. John XIX. 18——30.

WE are now attending to one of the moſt intereſting ſcenes in all hiſtory, the cruel and ignominious death of Jeſus. It was the triumph of his enemies, but, tho' unthought of by them, the neceſſary means of his exaltation and glory, as well as of the ſpread of his religion; by giving ſuch an evidence to his reſurrection, as no other mode of death could have given to it. Far be it from us to ſuppoſe that God was pleaſed with this ſcene, any farther than as it exhibited the higheſt act of obedience to his will, by the moſt perfect of our race, and as it was the means of giving the higheſt degree of evidence to the truth of the goſpel, by which the world was reclaimed from idolatry and vice, and thereby men were fitted for a happy immortality.

Every particular in this intereſting ſcene is highly edifying to us, eſpecially the patience and compoſure with which Jeſus bore his cruel ſufferings, from a principle

ciple of perfect reſignation to the will of God, and the proſpect of honour to which he would be advanced in conſequence of it. For, being a man, he felt as a man, both with reſpect to fears and hopes. In the garden he felt the apprehenſion of his approaching ſufferings with the ſtrongeſt marks of anxiety and diſtreſs, and now *for the joy that was ſet before him*, as the apoſtle ſays, *he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame*.

John XIX. 19. The uſe of this inſcription was that all who were preſent at the execution might know what the crime, real or ſuppoſed, had been.

Matt. xxvii. 34. This may be rendered *bitters*, and not *gall*. It was ſome intoxicating draught. W.

Some think this wine mingled with gall was a different thing *from wine mingled with myrrh*, mentioned Mark xvi. 23. and that the former was offered by way of inſult, and the latter by his friends, it being a ſtupifying portion, kindly intended to make him leſs ſenſible of pain. Pearce obſerves that *wine mingled with frankincenſe* was uſually given by the Jews to ſuch perſons as were to ſuffer death; and Galen, he ſays, obſerves that the juice of poppies, myrrh, &c. taken in large quantities, does intoxicate, or kill; and Theophraſtus ſays of *myrrh*, that it is of a warm nature, aſtringent, and bitter. Well, therefore, ſays Pearce, might Matthew call it *gall*. Whatever the potion was, Jeſus declined availing himſelf of it, chuſing to meet death in all its natural horror.

46. *Eli, Eli*, &c.] Our Lord, by quoting the beginning of the Pſalm, probably meant to refer the Jews to

the

the whole of it, as remarkably deſcriptive of himſelf and his preſent ſituation.

47. *Some of them that ſtood by ſaid, This man calleth for Elias.*] Thoſe muſt have been perſons who did not underſtand Hebrew or Syriac.

50. *With a loud voice.*] Grotius, and others, ſuppoſe that this ſtrength of voice was an argument of ſo great remains of bodily ſtrength, that our lord's death which followed inſtantly upon it, muſt have been preternatural, ſo that he voluntarily put an end to his own ſufferings, or that God choſe to interpoſe in his favour in this manner. But this appears to me greatly to leſſon the merit of our Saviour's ſufferings, and the influence of his *example in ſuffering*; for certainly none of his followers have any reaſon to expect a miraculous interpoſition to diminiſh or ſhorten their pains. Beſides the *loud cry* might be the effect of a kind of convulſion. And conſidering how much our Lord muſt have been exhauſted by his agony in the garden, and the cruel abuſe he had met with, both in the high prieſt's hall, and by the Roman ſoldiers, and the extreme ſenſibility of his mind, it is no wonder that the vital powers failed before thoſe of the two robbers, and therefore that he died a proper natural death before them. It has been ſaid that the Roman Centurion ſeemed to have thought there was ſomething ſupernatural in the *manner* of his death, by which he was convinced that he was the *Son of God*, Mark xv, 39. But what ſtruck him was, more probably, the devout compoſure with which he died, after uttering diſtinctly the words of the Pſalm above mentioned,

and

and after ſaying *Father into thy hands I commit my ſpirit.*

Luke XXIII. 44. *The ſun was darkened*;] not by any eclipſe, which could not have happened at the time of the Jewiſh paſſover, it being always on the full moon, but probably the ſky being unuſually covered with black clouds. For this darkneſs is not ſaid to have been miraculous.

42. *Lord remember me.*] Pearce ſays that this man ſeems to have thought that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, and that, though he now ſuffered death, he would be raiſed again to life, and would then ſit on his temporal kingdom. But it may be aſked, how came this man to hope in circumſtances in which all the apoſtles deſpaired.

43. *To-day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.*] By *paradiſe* the Jews meant the place of reſt for good men, where they were to ſleep till the reſurrection. It was one region in the imaginary *Hades*, but ſuppoſed to be ſeparated from the place of the wicked.

The exact literal conſtruction of theſe words cannot be true, if by *paradiſe* be meant any other than the imaginary place of ſleep for deceaſed good men. For if by paradiſe be meant the place where God is peculiarly preſent, Chriſt himſelf did not go thither till after his aſcenſion, when only he is ſaid to have gone to the Father; and even his apoſtles are expreſsly ſaid not to be with him there till after the reſurrection, for he ſays, John xiv. 3. *I will come again and receive you unto myſelf, that where I am there ye may be alſo.*

For theſe reaſons ſome ſuppoſe that *this day* refers to the time when the promiſe was made, as if Jeſus had ſaid,

ſaid, "At this very time, notwithſtanding my preſent "circumſtances of diſgrace and ſeeming impotence, yet "*even now* I do aſſure thee, that in due time thou ſhalt "be with me in paradiſe."

This conſtruction, however, does not appear to me to be natural. I rather think that by *this day, certainty* was intended. In the ſame caſe the word *ſoon*, and other ſimilar expreſſions are ſometimes to be underſtood See Deut.

Luke adds a circumſtance of much importance omitted by the other evangeliſts, viz. the prayer of Jeſus, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* This was probably pronounced at the time of his greateſt agony, as they were nailing him to the croſs, or afterwards raiſing it up as he hung upon it; and probably reſpected the ſoldiers only, who were his *immediate* executioners, and who had no concern in the guilt of the tranſaction. It ſhews, however, the moſt wonderful compoſure of mind and benevolence, to which very few have attained.

John xix. 22. It is plain that the real wiſhes of Pilate had been over ruled by the violence of the Jews, and tho', to ſave himſelf from a proſecution, he had given up Jeſus to their will, he was far from being in good humour with them, or diſpoſed to oblige them farther than neceſſary.

23. It ſeems to have been the cuſtom of moſt nations that the executioners ſhould have the clothes of thoſe whom they executed.

Matt. XXVII. 35. The latter part of this verſe, concerning

cerning the paſſage in the Pſalms, is not in any of the antient verſions, except the Vulgate. W.

44. Luke relates this part of the hiſtory very differently, repreſenting not both the thieves, but one of them only, as reviling Jeſus, Ch. xxiii, 39. But Luke, not being preſent, might not have been ſo well informed as Matthew was; and, beſides being contrary to the account of Matthew, there are many difficulties attending it.

That both, or either of theſe men, themſelves, in a ſtate of torture, ſhould be ſo abandoned as to revile their fellow ſufferer, would not be credible, if we did not ſee at this day the ſame extreme obduracy in many of our condemned maleſactors. Beſides, it is poſſible that theſe men might entertain hopes of being releaſed from their ſufferings, by joining in the popular cry againſt Jeſus. For the wounds made by crucifixion were not mortal; ſo that they might have recovered very well, if they had been taken down from the croſſes.

John XIX. 23. *The veſt was without ſeam.*] According to Dr. Shaw (*Travels*, p. 266) the Jews wore a cloſe bodied frock, or tunic without ſleeves, which differed little from the Roman tunica. The χιτων, or coat of our Saviour, which was woven without ſeam from the top throughout, might be of the like faſhion. This was retained when a perſon was ſaid to lay aſide his garment, as of our Saviour when he waſhed his diſciple's feet, and of Peter when he ſwam to the ſhore. All the garments of the Eaſtern people were looſe, and wide, ſo as to fit almoſt any perſon; a circumſtance which

explains many paſſages of ſcripture, and accounts for the large quantity of clothes ready made, with which the wardrobes of the rich were furniſhed.

25. *Mary the wife of Cleophas.*] She is ſaid Matt. xxvii, 56, and Mark xv. 40, to have been *the mother of James the less*, and of *Joses*; and this James her ſon is ſaid, Matthew x, 3, to have been the *ſon of Alpheus*. From hence it ſeems that Alpheus and Cleophas, or Clopas, were the ſame perſon. To this may be added, that Higeſippus is quoted by Euſebius, as ſaying that Clopas was the brother of Joſeph, the huſband of Jeſus's mother. *Pearce.*

27. We ſee in this beautiful incident, both the affection of Jeſus to his friends, and his wonderful compoſure and preſence of mind in his ſufferings. He was not ſo abſorbed in his own feelings, as not to be attentive to the caſe of his mother who was ſtanding near him. He recommended her to the care of John, who was probably the moſt opulent, and perhaps alſo the moſt affectionate, of his apoſtles. From this time he was to conſider her as his own mother, which he appears to have done, by taking her from that time to his own houſe.

The behaviour of Mary the mother of Jeſus may ſerve to reprove the falſe or affected tenderneſs of ſome women, who abſent themſelves from all ſcenes of diſtreſs, as too much *hurting their feelings*, tho' in general ſuch perſons have but little of real ſympathy. Here we ſee the mother of Jeſus, no way deficient in her affection for her ſon, attending him in a ſtate of torture, tho' ſhe was unable to give him aſſiſtance. Tho' it is

ſaid

ſaid that this diſciple took her to his own home *from that hour*, it may only mean from *that time in general*, and that ſhe continued near the place of execution ſome time after this.

28. *I thirſt.*] The paſſage referred to is Pſalm xxiii. 15, and Pſalm Lxix. 21.

29. *Vinegar.*] Probably vinegar and water, *poſca*, which was the common drink of the Roman ſoldiers.

——*On a light ſpear.* Conj. T. R.

Matt. XXVII. 45. This darkneſs is not ſaid to have been miraculous.

John XIX. 29. In this it is probable that no inſult was intended. The common ſoldiers were perhaps by this time moved with ſome compaſſion, and gave him ſome of their common drink.

A ſtalk of hyſſop was long enough for this purpoſe, but ſuppoſing a very ſlight alteration in the manuſcript, the word will ſignify a *light ſpear*, which was certainly ſtill more proper.

Luke XXIII. 46. It was uſual with the antients to receive the laſt breath of their departing friends, thoſe for whom they had the greateſt eſteem, and in whom they placed the greateſt confidence. Thus Jeſus, perhaps with a view to this cuſtom, deſired God his Father to receive his laſt breath; and thus Stephen deſired Jeſus to receive *his*. But as the word which we tranſlate *breath* means *life*, the power of breathing ending with life; Jeſus migh have a farther view viz. to commit his life into the hands of God, who he was perſuaded, would ſoon reſtore it to him again.

John XIX. 30. It is impoſſible to peruſe this account of the ſufferings of Jeſus with any proper attention, without being ſatisfied that he was neither an enthuſiaſt, nor an impoſtor. His coolneſs and preſence of mind was inconſiſtent with the former character, and his ſubmitting to die at all was a proof that he could not be the latter. He voluntarily ſurrendered himſelf into the hands of his enemies, when he might have made his eſcape; and this he never would have done if he had not been conſcious of a divine miſſion, and thereby fully perſuaded that God would raiſe him from the dead, and advance him to a ſtate of glory after death.

Now let unbelievers account, if they can, for Jeſus being poſſeſſed of this perſuaſion in his circumſtances. A man whoſe mind was ſo tranquil, and who acted with the moſt perfect compoſure on all occaſions, could never have got this firm perſuaſion without the evidence of unqueſtionable miracles, ſuch as ſatisfied him that God was with him, and would carry him through any ſufferings that he had appointed him to undergo; and it would require ſtronger evidence to give this perfect ſatisfaction to the perſon who was himſelf to ſuffer a cruel death, in the ſupport of any ſcheme, than it would to convince another leſs deeply intereſted in it.

SEC-

SECTION LXXXVIII.

The burial of Jesus.

Matt. XXVII. 57——66, Mark XV. 38——47. Luke XXIII. 45, 47——56. John XIX. 31——42.

WE have been attending to one of the moſt intereſting and affecting of all ſcenes, that of the crucifixion of Jeſus, and have ſeen the amazing fortitude and meekneſs with which he bore all that human nature could bear, the tortures of a violent and lingering death. Even in theſe circumſtances, in which there are evident indications of his having actually felt whatever any other man could have felt in the ſame ſituation, he even prayed for his executioners, and expreſſed the greateſt tenderneſs for his mother, as well as the moſt perfect confidence in God. It is a ſcene that we ought frequently to contemplate, either to prepare us for whatever ſufferings it may pleaſe God to appoint for us, as the followers of Chriſt, or to make us thankful that, at this day, we can have the ſame glorious hopes of the goſpel without ſo ſevere a trial. Let us, however, be upon our guard againſt the trials of ſecurity, and proſperity, which are no leſs dangerous than thoſe of adverſity; nay in general, more ſo. If the one has ſlain its thouſands, the other has ſlain its ten thouſands.

Matt. XXVII. 54. The heathens reſpected many perſons in a ſimilar character, and this centurion, having

ing heard that Jeſus had called himſelf *the ſon of God*, he repeats the very words, convinced that a man who died as he did muſt have ſpoken the truth.

56. The mother of Jeſus is not mentioned among theſe women. It is poſſible, therefore, that unable to bear the trying ſcene any longer, ſhe had been led home by John, who himſelf had returned, for he was preſent when the ſpear was thruſt into the ſide of Jeſus. Mary, however, might ſtay till he was actually dead, as a conſiderable time paſſed between his death and the order given by Pilate to diſpatch both him and the two thieves.

John xix. 31. This was both a Sabbath day, and alſo the ſecond day of the feaſt of unleavened bread, from which they reckoned the *fifty days* to the day of Pentecoſt, and the day on which the ſheaf of firſt fruits was offered.

The Romans had been uſed to let the bodies of perſons crucified remain on the croſſes till they were devoured by birds of prey. But this being contrary to the law of the Jews, the Romans indulged them with diſpatching and burying ſuch perſons before ſunſet.

32. By *breaking the legs* muſt be meant the diſpatching of them, and therefore it was probably a blow on the breaſt, ſuch as is uſually given to thoſe who are broken on the wheel, which will effectually anſwer the end; whereas the mere breaking of the legs would hardly do it.

34. John wrote after the ſect of the Gnoſtics was prevalent, and one of their opinions was that Jeſus had no real body, but only the appearance of one, and conſequently

ſequently that he had neither proper fleſh or blood, and was incapable of feeling pain. On this account probably, John, whoſe epiſtles are all directed againſt the Gnoſtics, is ſo particular in aſſerting that he actually ſaw blood flowing from the body of Jeſus.

25. Mr. W. ſuppoſes that by *he*, Jeſus himſelf is meant, being appealed to for the truth of this circumſtance.

This wound with the ſpear in the cheſt would certainly have killed Jeſus, if he had not been dead before. But ſo little doubt was there concerning the death of Jeſus, that this objection to chriſtianity was never made in any early period; and now it certainly comes too late to deſerve any attention. There could not have been better proviſion for the actual death of Jeſus than putting him into the hands of his enemies for that purpoſe; as they would, no doubt, take care that the buſineſs was effectually done.

37. This is ſpoken of the Jews after their return to their own country, and the prophecy it contains is certainly very remarkable, and together with what the apoſtle Paul ſays, Rom. 11. aſſures us that the Jews will not only return to their own country, but alſo be converted to chriſtianity.

38. This ſhewed ſome degree of courage in Joſeph of Arimathea, more than he had ſhewn before. But now the confeſſion of the centurion, and the manner in which all who were preſent were ſtruck with the very remarkable circumſtances in the death of Jeſus, made this conduct much ſafer than it otherwiſe would have been. Beſides

he muſt have perceived that Pilate himſelf was far from being ſatisfied with the buſineſs.

40. The preparation of a body for ſuch a ſepulchre as Joſeph of Arimathea was preparing for Jeſus, was a very laborious thing, and muſt have employed a number of people a conſiderable time; ſo that if there had been any remains of life in the body, it muſt have been diſcovered. Indeed, on many accounts, the pretences of ſome perſons at this day that Jeſus was never properly dead, is moſt improbable. Was it poſſible for a perſon to have been taken down from a croſs, (even without conſidering the wound in his ſide, which certainly penetrated the Thorax) have been left in the ſtate of a common corpſe, wrapped up in bandages and ſpices, late on Friday, probably near midnight, have been ſhut up the whole of the next day in a cold cave, without any perſon to attend him, and have appeared in perfect health ſo early as the ſunday morning by break of day, without a miracle. On this account, the ſhortneſs of the time that Jeſus lay in the ſepulchre is a circumſtance highly favourable to the evidences of chriſtianity. It is evident that all the appearances were ſuch that neither the friends nor the enemies of Jeſus had any ſuſpicion of his being alive when he was taken down from the croſs; and as they had the beſt opportunity of judging the objection cannot deſerve the leaſt attention at this day.

Matthew XXVII. 51. *The rocks rent.*] Travellers ſay there is a very remarkable fiſſure now viſible on mount Calvary, which could not have been made by a natural

natural earthquake, because it is not *along the strata*, but directly across them.

52. *Bodies of the saints.* Who these saints were, whether some of those mentioned in the Old Testament, or some persons recently dead, and personally known to the living inhabitants of Jerusalem, does not appear; but the latter is the most probable. The graves seem to have been thrown open by, or at the time of the earthquake, but the dead are not said to have come to life till after the resurrection of Jesus. Whether they rose to an immortal life, or like Lazarus, were again subject to death, is not said.

60. The following account of our Lord's sepulchre, and the present state of it from Dr. Shaw (*Travels*, p. 264) may not be unacceptable to my readers. The sepulchre where our Lord was laid was hewn out of the natural rock, but by Helen's cutting away the rock round about it, that the floor, or bottom of it, might be on the same level with the rest of the pavement of the church, it is now a grotto above ground, curiously overlaid with marble.

It consists of one chamber only, without cells, benches, or ornaments, about seven feet square and six high; and over the place where the body was laid (whether this was a pit or whether the body lay bound up only in spices and linen upon the floor.) Here for many years an oblong table of stone, of three feet in breadth, and nearly of the same height, has been erected, which serves the Latins for an altar The low narrow door or entrance where the stone was fixed, and sealed, till rolled away by the angel, still continues to conduct us within

within it; and as this was not ſituated in the middle, but on the left hand, as the grave likewiſe, or the place where Chriſt was laid, may well be preſumed to have been placed within it, on the right hand, or where the altar is at preſent, we may from theſe circumſtances well account for Mary and John being obliged to *ſtoop down* before they could look into it.

63. *After three days.*] That this means *the third day*, is evident from a paſſage in the Old Teſtament, 2 Chron. x, 5. where Rehoboam ſaid to the people, *Come again unto me after three days*, and it is ſaid, ver. 13: and they *came unto him the third day, as the king had commanded*, ſaying, *come again to me on the third day*. Pearce mentions this, and other inſtances of the ſame kind.

65. Pilate was evidently out of humour with the Jews, as he had been when they applied to him to change the inſcription on the croſs.

66. It does not ſeem to have been poſſible for the enemies of Jeſus to have uſed more precautions than they did, in order to prevent any impoſition with reſpect to a reſurrection, of which it is very happy for us that they were fully appriſed; as their diſappointment is the greateſt confirmation of our faith.

Mark XV. 42. *The preparation*] So the day before the ſabbath was always called, and this is called the *preparation of* (not for) the *paſſover*, becauſe this ſabbath fell in the paſchal week.

Luke XXIII. 45. *The vail of the temple was rent.*] The vail that ſeparated the holy place from the Moſt Holy

Holy, and this was about the time that the prieſt was burning incenſe before it.

34. *Blood and water.*] This could not be the water of the pericardium, for that is not in ſufficient quantity; but it is ſaid that a great quantity of ſerum is always found in the thorax of perſons who die of torture. If this be ſo, it may be conſidered as a circumſtance that proves that the death of Jeſus was ſtrictly natural.

36. *A bone of him ſhall not be broken.*] This was ſaid of the *paſchal lamb*, which was in ſome reſpects typical of Chriſt.

39. *An hundred pound weight.*] It appears from Joſephus, that great quantities of ſpices were uſed by the Jews for embalming a dead body, when they intended to ſhew marks of reſpect to the deceaſed. Eighty pounds of ſpices were uſed at the funeral of Gamaliel the elder. Pearce.

SECTION LXXXIX.

The reſurrection of Jeſus. He appears to Mary Magdalene. Peter and John viſit the Sepulchre.

Matt. XXVIII. 1——15. Mark XVI. 1——11. Luke XXIV. 1——12. John XX. 1——18.

WE have been attending to the circumſtances of the death and burial of Jeſus. A ſtill more intereſting ſcene now invites our attention, and that is his reſurrection from the dead; an event in which we are

are moſt of all intereſted, ſince the great object of chriſtianity, and indeed of the whole ſyſtem of Revelation, is the doctrine of a *future life*, which is moſt completely aſcertained to us by this great event. Indeed, the death of Chriſt is of principal uſe as neceſſary to *his* reſurrection; and on this account the greateſt ſtreſs is always laid upon the certainty of the latter event. Thus Paul ſays to the Corinthians, *if Chriſt be not raiſed then is your faith vain, and they who are aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed*; there being no proſpect, in his idea, of any future life but on the ſuppoſition of a reſurrection from the dead.

The conſideration of Chriſt being a *man*, in all reſpects *like unto us his brethren*, is of particular uſe in this reſpect. Had he been an Angel, and eſpecially a being of a ſuper-angelic nature, it might have been thought that his reſurrection was a privilege peculiar to himſelf, and what we, who are beings of quite another nature, had no right to expect; different natures being ſubject to different laws. The ſame apoſtle therefore urges this conſideration alſo; ſaying that *as by man came death, ſo by man comes alſo the reſurrection of the dead.* As in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive; both being equally *men.*

The reſurrection of Jeſus was an event which he had frequently mentioned, and yet was never rightly underſtood, or expected, by his diſciples; ſo fully perſuaded were they of his being deſtined to be a great prince, and therefore far from being ſubject to a violent death; and with *this*, whatever he had ſaid of his *reſurrection*, had always been connected; as, when he had

ſaid

ſaid that his enemies would *kill him*, but that *in three days he ſhould riſe again*. Nothing could be plainer than this language. But as he had frequently ſpoken to them in a figurative and enigmatical ſtile, they took it for granted that he did ſo on this occaſion, and therefore they diſputed among themſelves about what this *riſing from the dead* ſhould mean; taking for granted that it meant ſomething elſe than a proper reſurrection, becauſe that would have implied a proper death.

Even when Jeſus was actually dead and buried, it is plain that none of his diſciples had any idea of his reſurrection. They were only occupied about ſhewing all the reſpect they could to the body according to the cuſtom of thoſe times; and it is curious to obſerve how the incredulity of the diſciples with reſpect to a real reſurrection was gradually overcome.

Matt. XXVIII. 2. There had been a great *trembling*, or *fear*, viz. among the ſoldiers, not an *earthquake*, which the reaſoning will not admit. There are innumerable inſtances of this meaning of the Greek word. *Markland.*

4. Theſe keepers ſaw nothing of Jeſus. They only perceived the earthquake, and ſaw the angel, probably in the figure of a man, ſitting upon the ſtone which had covered the mouth of the ſepulchre.

15. This was a very improbable ſtory, but the beſt that could have been imagined in their circumſtances, as what was moſt likely to gain credit with many, who were ſufficiently prediſpoſed to believe any tale of the kind. And this was concerted between them before it was known, even to the diſciples, that Jeſus was riſen.

It was only known that the ſepulchre was opened, and they would naturally add all the reſt. It muſt, however, have made much againſt them, that they did not even pretend to have been overpowered by any multitude. For to have rolled a ſtone of that magnitude, and not to have awakened any of the people who were ſleeping near it, and then to have ſtolen the body, was abſolutely impoſſible. But nothing can be more improbable than that a company of Roman ſoldiers ſhould all ſleep upon guard, when they had but a fourth part of the night to keep awake, and death was the penalty of ſleeping.

Mark XVI. 2. *At the riſing of the ſun.*] Pearce thinks that the original reading was, *the ſun not having yet riſen.*

Luke XXIV. 1. *And certain others with them.*] Pearce conſiders theſe words as ſuperfluous and an interpolation.

John XX. 2. It is evident from this circumſtance, that theſe women were far from having any expectation of a reſurrection.

4. We ſee the great anxiety that ſat upon the minds of the diſciples of Jeſus by their behaviour on any new appearance reſpecting their beloved maſter. Mary *ran* to tell the apoſtles the ſurprizing news of the ſepulchre being open, and both Peter and John immediately *ran* to the ſepulchre.

7. This circumſtance of the linen clothes being found folded up in one place, and the napkin which had covered the head in another, was a proof that the body

body had not been removed in a hurry; as it would no doubt have been, if it had been carried off either by force, or by ſtealth, as it would have taken a great deal of time to diſengage the body from the many folds of linen cloth in which it was wrapped, eſpecially covered as it was with ſpices; and yet theſe clothes were removed, and left carefully folded up. This was ſo remarkable a circumſtance, that it ſeems to have convinced John, the writer of this account, that Jeſus was actually riſen; and in this his uſual modeſt manner, he ſeems to intimate that he was the firſt perſon who believed the reſurrection.

9. The evidence of a reſurrection, we ſee here, was only from *facts* and *circumstances*, and not at all from the *ſcriptures*, or from what Jeſus had told them.

11. Mary, after telling the diſciples the news of the ſepulchre being open, returned to the place where all her affections were centered, and continued there till Peter and John were returned; and having no idea of ſo great and joyful an event as the reſurrecton of Jeſus, ſhe ſat weeping.

12. Theſe angels had not appeared to Peter and John.

15. It is obſervablethat Mary does not mention the name of Jeſus. What was uppermoſt in her thoughts, ſhe would naturally think was the ſame in thoſe of other perſons.

16. Jeſus might make himſelf known by pronouncing the name of Mary more loud and diſtinct than he had ſpoken before, and perhaps with a tone of affection.

17. *Touch*

17. *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father*; intimating that as he was not yet ascended to his Father, she would have other more proper opportunities of shewing her respect to him, and in a more proper manner. For our Lord does not seem to have permitted any such familiarity as a salutation after his resurrection.

We see that Jesus, even after his resurrection, preserved the same sentiments of affection to his disciples, and also of piety to God, that had distinguished him before. But when Jesus could use such language as this, calling the Father his *God*, as well as the God of his disciples, is it not extraordinary that any christian should ever imagine that he himself was God, equal to the Father; or any thing more than a man, of the same nature with his apostles? *Tell my brethren*, says he. And yet in a course of time divine worship came to be paid to him, as to a person equal in power and glory to him whom he here stiles his *God and Father*, as well as the *God and Father of his disciples*.

SEC.

SECTION XC.

Jesus appears to two of the Disciples as they were walking to Emmaus.

Mark XVI. 12, 13. Luke XXIV. 13——35.

THE resurrection of Jesus is certainly the most important fact in the gospel history: and in proportion to its importance, the credibility of it is perhaps, when well considered, the greatest possible. I even think that it would not be difficult to shew, that no person has as yet suggested any new circumstance that would have made it so credible as it now is, at this distance of time. We may easily imagine that Jesus might have appeared so as to have made a greater impression upon the Jews, or the people of that generation in general; but it would, in consequence of that very circumstance, have appeared less credible to us at this time. For had the body of the Jewish nation been then convinced of it, and consequently have embraced christianity, it would have been considered now and hereafter, as a contrivance of the Jewish rulers; and had the Roman governor, and the Romans in general, been converted at that time, it would have worn a still more suspicious aspect at present. It was, on this account, therefore, far better that Jesus should satisfy a sufficient number of credible witnesses only, who were themselves indisposed to admit the fact; and this was the case even with the apostles themselves.

As to the ſuppoſition of the diſciples of Jeſus carrying away his body, their conſternation was ſo great that nothing of the kind could have occurred to them. If their minds had been at liberty for any ſuch ſcheme, and if they could have carried it into execution, it could not have anſwered their purpoſe of making the people believe that he was riſen from the dead. For the mere removal of the body would have been no proof of that; and how could they expect to ſucceed even in *this*. For what could they have done againſt the guard of Roman ſoldiers?

In this, however, we may ſee the wiſdom of that part of the plan of divine providence, which ordered that Jeſus ſhould continue in the ſepulchre no longer than until the third day. Had this interval been much longer, it might have been ſaid that the diſciples might have recovered from their conſternation; and that the watch becoming more remiſs, they might have found an opportunity of executing their purpoſe.

I have obſerved the extreme improbability of Jeſus continuing alive during the time of the preparation for his ſepulchre, and his continuing ſwathed with ſpices according to the Jewiſh cuſtom, while he was in the ſepulchre. Had he been found alive, he muſt have been in a very languiſhing ſtate; and yet he appeared with all the marks of perfect health ſeveral times in the courſe of the ſame day, which was the third from his death; firſt to Mary, then to Peter (of the particulars of which we are not informed) and now, we ſhall ſee, to two diſciples going to Emmaus; and afterwards to all the diſciples.

18 This

Luke XXIV. 18. This *Cleopas*, is the ſame with *Alpheus*, the father of James the leſs, and Judas, two of the apoſtles.

The crucifixion of Jeſus was ſo much the ſubject of converſation, that theſe diſciples ſuppoſe that every ſtranger in Jeruſalem muſt have heard of it. It is no wonder that it wholly occupied their thoughts, and that the conſideration of it filled them with melancholy.

21. We ſee here that the idea of a *Meſſiah*, was, in the minds of the Jews, the ſame with that *of a perſon who was to redeem Iſrael*, or deliver them from their ſubjection to the Romans. We can the leſs wonder at the rejection of Jeſus by the Scribes and Phariſees on account of his not being ſuch a Meſſiah as this, when we find the very diſciples of Jeſus to have been ſo ſtrongly under the ſame prejudice.

27. He ſhews them that the death and reſurrection of the Meſſiah were circumſtances that were not unſuitable to his character and office, as deſcribed in the prophecies in which he was mentioned, or alluded to.

They then gave more attention to his perſon, whereas before they had been too much occupied in their own thoughts.

33. They are called *eleven*, though Thomas was not with them.

34. Tho' they did not believe the firſt account of the reſurrection of Jeſus, which had been given them by Mary Magdalene, they appear to have had no doubts after he had been ſeen by Peter; but a ſecond evidence of the ſame fact, from any other perſon of credit, man or woman, would certainly have impreſſed them more than the firſt.

Mark XVI. 12. *In another form*;] Probably in a different dreſs from that which he had uſually worn.

SECTION XCII.

Jeſus appears to all the Apoſtles;

Mark XVI. 14. Luke XXIV. 36——49. John XX. 19——31.

THAT you may have a more diſtinct idea of the order of the appearances of Jeſus to his diſciples after his reſurrection, I ſhall briefly recite them all, as they ſeem to me to have taken place; and the gradation in the evidence of the fact is not a little remarkable. At firſt the diſciples had no expectation of any ſuch thing, but the appearance of Jeſus to ſome of them awakened the attention and ſuſpicion of others, and at length his repeated appearances to them all, ſatisfied them all.

"The ſtone was rolled away, &c." Diſſertations on the Harmony of the Evangeliſts, p. 119, &c.

Luke XXIV. 36. This was the uſual form of ſalutation among the Jews, and appears to have been cuſtomary with Jeſus; as when he ſaid, *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.* By *peace* was meant all kind of happineſs.

37. On another occaſion, viz. the appearance of Jeſus to his diſciples on the ſea, they thought that they had ſeen a ſpirit. Such a notion of a ſpirit, or an attenuated

tenuated aerial ſubſtance, a kind of ſhadow, appears to have been the opinion of the vulgar in all ages: but it does not appear that the Jews thought theſe ſpirits to have been the ſouls of particular perſons. Whether theſe ſpirits, or apparitions, were the ſame with *dæmons*, which were ſuppoſed to poſſeſs men, and occaſion inſanity, does not appear.

41. The more unexpected any event is, the ſtronger evidence we require of it. This event of the reſurrection of their Lord and maſter, tho' nothing could be more joyful to his diſciples, appeared to them to be too great and happy to be true, and nothing but the moſt undeniable evidence could ſatisfy them with reſpect to it. At firſt they were in a kind of aſtoniſhment, or ſtupor, incapable of reflection, and conſequently of proper conviction; and it was not till they recovered from this ſtate of mind, that they could properly exerciſe their judgments. When the woman told them that their maſter was riſen, they conſidered it as an idle tale, and believed her not. How natural is all this; and how ſtrong is the evidence ariſing from it to the truth of this important part of the goſpel hiſtory! The writers deſcribe real ſituations, and real ſentiments of the human heart correſponding to thoſe ſituations.

Have ye here any meat?] This, and what follows about Jeſus eating in the preſence of the apoſtles, ſeems to have been (as John has placed it, Ch. xxi. 13.) in Galilee, when he appeared to them near the ſea of Tiberias; but Luke has joined this to Jeſus's firſt appearance to the apoſtles, while John has more juſtly ſeparated them. Pearce.

42. *And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honey comb.*] It does not follow the the Jews eat fish and honey together; but they offered our Lord the choice of the moſt delicate food that they had. *Harmer's Obſervations*, Vol. I. p. 313.

To give them the fuller opportunity of obſerving him, that he was truly alive, and had the ſame animal functions of which he was poſſeſſed before, he ate and drank as he had been uſed to do in their preſence. But whether there will be an abſolute neceſſity for our being ſupported by the ſame kind of food after the general reſurrection, we cannot certainly infer from this circumſtance; as perhaps the body of Jeſus had not then undergone that remarkable *change* which we are informed is to take place with reſpect to all men in a future ſtate. It is evident that the wounds of Jeſus were not cloſed, which muſt have been with a view to give his diſciples the moſt ſatisfactory evidence of his being the ſame perſon who had been crucified; but we cannot ſuppoſe any will appear wounded and maimed after the reſurrection.

46. The Jews, naturally enough, imagined that there were references to the Meſſiah in all their books of ſcripture; and as far as the future glorious ſtate of their nation may be conſidered as comprehended in the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, there are ſuch in the books of Moſes, tho' I do not think there is any thing of that kind in the book of Pſalms, the authors of which do not pretend to prophecy. But ſince the death of the Meſſiah is particularly mentioned in Daniel, and and yet his ſubſequent glorious reign is likewiſe ſpoken

ken of in his writings, his reſurrection from the dead is neceſſarily underſtood. In this ſenſe, the reſurrection of the Meſſiah was foretold by the ancient prophets, but no where that I find in a direct manner. It was ſufficient for Jeſus to be informed that he was the Meſſiah. As to the particular paſſages in the books of ſcripture relating to the Meſſiah, we are not told that he had any ſupernatural information on the ſubject, and therefore, with reſpect to *this*, he would be left to the uſe of his own underſtanding as other Jews were.

47. *And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name, that is in his ſtead*, the apoſtles being ambaſſadors for him. Thus the apoſtle Paul, *We are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, and we beſeech you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.*

John XX. 22. As the word which we render *ſpirit* properly ſignifies *breath*, Jeſus, by this expreſſive action of *breathing*, intimated the paſſage of the ſpirit of God from him to them.

23. This is not to be interpreted literally, but it expreſſes the office of a judge, or of a perſon inveſted with *power in general*. It could never depend upon the arbitrary pleaſure of any man, to remit the ſins of men that were not repented of; and if they were repented of, we know that God will remit them, whatever any man may ſay to the contrary.

25. The ſtubborn incredulity of Thomas is a circumſtance remarkably favourable to the compleat evidence of the reſurrection of Jeſus. It was only the evidence of his own actually feeling and handling of him, and

not that of his hearing or ſeeing, that would ſatisfy him.

26. Upon the whole, it is moſt probable that Jeſus entered into the room in ſome miraculous manner, perhaps opening the door inviſibly. But we can by no means infer from this fact, tho' ſome have ſuppoſed it, that he paſſed through the door while it was ſhut; and therefore that our bodies will be of a ſimilar ſpiritual nature in a future ſtate. In other reſpects the body of Jeſus was not changed; and as it could be felt and handled, it muſt have been capable of *reſiſtance*, and therefore incapable of paſſing through any other ſubſtance.

28. *My Lord, and my God!*] This is an exclamation, or imperfect ſentence, which does not *aſſert* that Chriſt is God; but ſeems intended to expreſs, in an abrupt manner, Thomas's aſtoniſhment at the power of God, manifeſted in the raiſing his Lord from the dead.

It is acknowledged that no Jew ever expected any other than a man for their Meſſiah. The apoſtles muſt neceſſarily therefore have conſidered Jeſus as *ſuch*, all the time of their converſing with him before his death, and ſurely his having died would not tend to convince them that he was God. And as to his reſurrection the Jews expected the ſame for all men. It is not even certain that by Lord, Thomas meant Jeſus.

29. Very few could have the opportunity of ſeeing Jeſus after his reſurrection, and thereby having ſuch evidence of the truth of this fact as Thomas had. Jeſus might alſo mean to intimate, that his reſurrection was not in itſelf ſo very improbable a thing, but that, with a

proper

proper diſpoſition of mind, even leſs evidence than Thomas had would have been ſufficient to make it credible.

31. As by the phraſe, *Jeſus being the Chriſt*, in the epiſtles of John, he certainly means to oppoſe the doctrine of the Gnoſtics, who held that Chriſt was a ſuper-angelic being, who either deſcended into Jeſus, or aſſumed the form of a man only, it is probable that by the ſame phraſe, the ſame writer meant the ſame thing; and therefore he is to be underſtood as intending to ſay that, in his opinion, ſuch a hiſtory of Jeſus as he had given would ſatisfy any perſon that Jeſus was properly a *man*, like other men, and that this *man*, without any thing ſuper-added to him, was the Chriſt or the Meſſiah.

The proper end of the evangelical hiſtory is to convince mankind of the divine miſſion, or meſſiahſhip, of Jeſus, and the end of this is obedience to his goſpel, which will inſure our immortal life and happineſs. With this ſentiment the apoſtle ſeems to have intended to cloſe his goſpel. The next and laſt chapter was probably added afterwards, as a ſupplement to it; containing a more particular account of the firſt appearance of Jeſus in Galilee, which had been omitted by himſelf, as well by the other Evangeliſts.

PARAPHRASE.

John XX. 23. With the Holy Spirit which ſhall be ſent upon you, I ſhall give you authority and power in my church, to receive into it, and to caſt out of it, whom you ſhall judge proper; and as you will be under the direction

direction of the Holy Spirit, God himself will confirm your decisions. See the note on Matt. xvi. 19. p. 266.

SECTION XCII.

Jesus appears to his Disciples in Galilee.

Matt. XXVIII. 16. 17. John XXI. 1——25.

JESUS, in order to give the most undeniable evidence of his resurrection, appeared frequently to his disciples after he rose from the dead. The apostle Paul mentions eleven distinct appearances in all. In most of them Jesus took his disciples, as it were by surprize, appearing to them when they did not expect him; and to such appearances, which were the first, there could be the least objection, as it could not be said they went to the interview with their minds prepossessed with any expectation of the kind, and were therefore more easily to be imposed upon. But one of the appearances was by particular appointment; and this was in Galilee, where he had spent the greatest part of his public ministry, and where he was therefore the most generally known; and to this meeting all the disciples of Jesus without distinction had access; and according to Paul, more than five hundred persons attended, and therefore, of a public appearance, it was the most unexceptionable that can be imagined, since all the disciples, having previous knowledge of it, would naturally go prepared

prepared to get that particular evidence which would beſt ſatisfy themſelves. Beſides, as this very public meeting could be no ſecret, it is not improbable but that ſome of the enemies of Jeſus might attend and be convinced. This appearance is ſaid to have been upon a mountain in Galilee, and therefore may be the ſame on which he delivered what is called the ſermon on the mount.

This public appearance of Jeſus is only ſlightly mentioned by Matthew, who alſo only mentions the eleven being there, tho' it can hardly be doubted that it was the ſame time at which Paul ſays that he was ſeen by more than five hundred at once. On this account, however, it would appear leſs neceſſary to give ſo particular an account of this meeting, as of thoſe at which the eleven apoſtles, or only a few perſons attended.

But there is another appearance of Jeſus in Galilee of which John only gives any account, and this was without particular notice, and was therefore unexpected. It probably preceeded the public meeting mentioned by Matthew and Paul.

Matthew XXVIII. 16. *Neither did they doubt any longer.* Beza in his laſt edition. The Pruſſian verſion has. *They worshipped him, even those who had doubted.* O.

17. As Matthew could hardly mean that any of this company who met Jeſus by appointment had any doubt of his reſurrection *after the interview*, it is moſt probable, notwithſtanding the literal conſtruction of his words, that his meaning was that theſe doubts preceded the interview. The apoſtles, who had the beſt opportunity

portunity of satisfying themselves concerning the fact, were abundantly convinced of the truth of the resurrection before this time, even Thomas the most incredulous of them all. But whatever might be the case with respect to some of this particular company, the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus was such as to remove all doubts from many thousands who were not present, but who only heard the evidence of it from the apostles and others, at, and after the day of pentecost; and who saw the miracles wrought by the apostles. And the evidence which satisfied *them*, indisposed as all the Jews were to admit a fact of this kind, who had all the necessary means of judging of it, and the strongest motives, respecting both this life and the future one, not to take up their opinion on slight grounds, ought to satisfy *us*. There is no other kind of evidence of any past transaction whatever.

John XXI. 3. The apostles had probably gone to Galilee with a view to meet Jesus according to his appointment, and that they might not pass their time in idleness, they chose to employ themselves in their former occupation of fishermen.

6. This circumstance, so similar to another on the same sea, would naturally bring to their minds the former miracle, and make them consider more attentively who it was that was speaking to them. This extraordinary draught of fishes may be also considered as an emblem of their success, when they should be, what Jesus upon a former occasion called them, *fishers of men*.

7. i. e. Without his upper garment.

9. *And*

9. *And fish.*] It may be rendered *food*, or *victuals in general.* Pearce.

15. Tho' Jeſus had a particular interview with Peter, which no doubt ſatisfied him of his having forgiven him for his cowardly deſertion of him, in conſideration of his bitter repentance, he thought proper, by this manner of ſpeaking to him before the eleven, to reprove him (tho' with great gentleneſs) for his former confidence, in ſaying that *tho' all men would forſake him, yet would not he*, as if he had had greater love for his maſter, and a ſtronger attachment to him, than the other apoſtles. Alſo, what Jeſus ſaid upon this occaſion would ſatisfy all his brethren, that notwithſtanding his late fall, he had no doubt of his doing his duty as a faithful preacher of the goſpel, and that he would not ſhrink even from a violent death for his ſake.

17. As Peter had denied Chriſt *three times*, it is obſervable that our Lord made him repeat his profeſſion of love to him three times.

18. When Jeſus ſaid this, Peter had probably pulled off his wet clothes, and was girding his dry garments, which would give a proper occaſion, according to Jeſus's manner, to give this prediction. *Markland.*

19. *This ſaid he, ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorify God.*] Peter is ſaid to have ſuffered martyrdom at Rome, being crucified with his head downwards; but the fact is queſtioned by many. It is probable, however, that Peter had ſuffered martyrdom at the time of John's writing this, and that the circumſtances of it were well known.

This

21. This was a very improper curiosity, and as such is reproved by Jesus.

22. i. e. What is it to thee, whether he die at all, or not.

It should seem from Jesus's intimating that it depended upon *himself*, whether John should die or not, that he had some important part to act on the theatre of this world before his *coming with power and great glory*, to take possession of his proper *kingdom*; and his appearances to Paul, and the instructions he gave him, are some evidences of this. But it is wisely concealed from us what this part is; probably lest it should lead to improper regards. Our business is with our own conduct, and our prayers are to be directed not to Christ, but to *his father and our father, to his God and our God.*

Tarry till I come.] Meaning probably till the destruction of Jerusalem, an event which it is said John, and it is thought no other apostle, survived.

25. *Would not contain.*) Some would render this *would not receive*; but it seems to have been a mere hyperbolical expression, common enough with other writers. Besides, if the world would not receive what the evangelist did write, how could he expect they would receive what he could have added. *Peurce.*—It seems to mean that the work would be too voluminous for the generality of readers, and would rather disgust them.

The facts contained in all the gospels taken together (and John had probably seen the other three and the evidence on which they rest) was, in the opinion of this apostle,

apoſtle, ſufficient to convince all candid perſons of the divine miſſion of Jeſus, and every thing beyond this was juſtly deemed ſuperfluous. If any perſons be ſo diſpoſed as that reaſonable evidence will not ſatisfy them, they are anſwerable for all the conſequences of their unbelief.

SECTION XCIII.

Jesus gives his final instructions to his Apostles, and ascends to heaven.

Matt. XXVIII. 18——20. Mark XVI. 15——20. Luke XXIV. 50——53. Acts, I. 3——11.

I AM now come in the courſe of reading the goſpel hiſtory, to the laſt ſcene of it, viz. the final inſtructions that Jeſus gave to his apoſtles, and his aſcenſion into heaven. He had continued with them after his reſurrection, what may certainly be deemed to be a ſufficient time for giving them every reaſonable ſatisfaction with reſpect to that event. For as he appeared frequently, and in different circumſtances, they who had not an opportunity of making proper obſervations at one time, might have it at another; ſo that there can be no doubt but that, incredulous as all of them were on the ſubject, he left them perfectly ſatisfied with reſpect to it.

The nature of the thing admits of no evidence of this fact, but that of thoſe who were afterwards the friends

friends of Chriſt, becauſe it was impoſſible for any perſon to be convinced of the truth of his reſurrection and remain an enemy to him. But if by enemies we mean thoſe who had been unbelievers in the reſurrection, we muſt include all the apoſtles themſelves, and eſpecially Paul, who from being an inveterate perſecutor of chriſtians, became the moſt active promoter of chriſtianity.

Luke XXIV. 50. i. e. The precincts of Bethany on the mount of Olives, which lay between Bethany and Jeruſalem. It was the ſame mountain from which he had delivered his awful prophecy concerning the deſtruction of the temple, and the deſolation of Judea.

Mark XVI. 15. It is ſomething extraordinary that notwithſtanding this ſolemn and expreſs commiſſion to *preach the goſpel to the whole creation*, that is to all mankind, the apoſtles ſhould ſtill imagine that it was to be preached to the Jews only; and that it ſhould require a particular interpoſition of providence to enlighten their minds on the ſubject. They no doubt underſtood him to mean, that they were to preach to Jews in all parts of the world.

16. There are ſo many paſſages of ſcripture (indeed the whole tenor of it) that confine the happineſs of heaven to the righteous, and exclude from it all vicious perſons, that it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that this is not implied, tho' it be not directly expreſſed, in this particular place.

17. The miracles here ſpecified, are ſuch as imply that the apoſtles would ſucceed in the very ſame powers which had been committed to himſelf, eſpecially that

that of caſting out demons, or curing inſanity, which was always juſtly conſidered as of a peculiarly wonderful nature. Some of theſe particulars, as that of their ſpeaking with new tongues, had not been exemplified in Jeſus himſelf; and on this account he might ſay that, after the deſcent of the ſpirit, they would be enabled to do even *greater things than he had done.* We have no account of the *taking up of ſerpents*, which implies their being bitten by them without receiving any hurt, but in the hiſtory of Paul, after a ſhip wreck on the iſle of Malta. Of their *drinking dreadful things*, or poiſonous draughts, without receiving hurt, we have no particular account in what is left us of the hiſtory of the apoſtles; but this is very little.

Matthew XXVIII. 18. It is probable, from ſeveral of our Saviour's parables, that the *power*, which he ſays here was *was given to him in heaven and in earth*, is not to be fully exerciſed till his ſecond coming with power and great glory, at the day of judgment; he being now, to adopt his own language, *gone to receive his kingdom*, or to be inveſted with it. But notwithſtanding this, it appears that during the age of the apoſtles, tho' probably not ſince that time, he had ſomething to do in this world, as appears by his being ſeen of Paul, and the inſtructions that he gave to him.

19. It does not appear that the apoſtles underſtood that theſe particular words were always to be pronounced at baptiſm. For whenever this rite is ſpoken of in the book of Acts, baptiſm is always ſaid to be adminiſtered *in the name of Chriſt only.* Afterwards great virtue was ſuppoſed to attend the pronunciation of theſe

words by perſons duly qualified; and therefore they are annexed to all the *seven ſacraments*, as they are called, of the church of Rome. Even in the celebration of marriage, of which the church of Rome made a ſacrament, and in conſequence of which that which is nothing more than a *civil contract*, muſt be entered into in the preſence of the clergy, and by certain ceremonies performed by them only, a man and woman are pronounced to be *man and wife, in the name of the Father the Son and the holy ghoſt.* In like manner abſolution is given by the popiſh prieſts, and alſo by the clergy of the church of England, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt.

It is therefore certainly far better, in order to avoid ſuperſtition, to expreſs the ſame meaning in other words, and to baptize as the apoſtles did, *in the name of Chriſt*, or into the Chriſtian religion, as that religion which was the gift of God by Jeſus Chriſt, confirmed by miracles, or the holy ſpirit.

20. *End of the world,*] literally *the end of the age*, by which ſome think is meant the end of the Jewiſh polity, or the period of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, to which they ſay this extraordinary aſſiſtance given to the apoſtles was limited. But as I ſee no ſufficient reaſon for confining this promiſe to that time, and there ſenſe in which it is applicable to all times, and the end of the age, *του αιωνος*, does ſometimes ſignify the period of the duration of the world and as I have obſerved thoſe events were apprehended to be nearer than they have appeared to be. I have retained the common verſion in this place.

That

That baptiſm in the name of Chriſt was not conſidered as any proof of his divinity, is evident from Paul's ſpeaking of the Iſraelites as baptized unto Moſes.

Luke XXIV. 53. i. e. they attended in the temple frequently, as at the times of morning and evening ſacrifice, along with other pious Jews, who perhaps joined the Levites in their ſinging of pſalms during the act of ſacrificing. Or they might paſs much of their time in the courts and precincts of the temple, as Jeſus did, during a great part of the day, for at night the gates were ſhut and guarded.

PARAPHRASE.

Mark XVI. 6. Whoſoever ſhall embrace chriſtianity, which will be by the ceremony of baptiſm, and ſhall act according to it, ſhall be ſaved; but he to whom it ſhall be propoſed with ſufficient evidence, and who ſhall not receive it, ſhall be condemned.

Thus I cloſe the hiſtory of our Saviour, a hiſtory with which all chriſtians cannot be too minutely acquainted, and ſhall proceed to that of the apoſtles, as it is delivered in the book of acts, which was written by Luke, in continuation of his goſpel.

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF

ACTS.

CHAPTER I.

NEXT to the *Gospels*, which contain an account of the doctrine, the miracles, the death and the reſurrection of Chriſt, there is no part of the New Teſtament of ſo much real value as this book of *Acts*, which ſhews in what manner the promiſes of our Saviour to the apoſtles were fulfilled, and how far his predictions relating to the propagation of his goſpel were accompliſhed. We here find that the apoſtles were actually *baptized with the holy ſpirit*, as John the Baptiſt foretold, and our Saviour confirmed; in conſequence of which they were endued with the power of working miracles, and their preaching had a very great and extenſive effect; at the ſame time that the preachers met with all that oppoſition and perſecution of which their maſter had apprized them.

As this book of Acts was written by Luke after his Goſpel, and it ends before the death of Paul, viz. at his impriſonment at Rome in the time of Nero, there can be no doubt but that his goſpel was written ſometime before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; and it is obſervable that our Saviour's prophecy of this remarkable event

as

as related by Luke, is more circumſtantial than that of any other of the evangeliſts.

As to the authenticity of this book of Acts, it is of the higheſt kind; being quoted by the earlieſt writers, eſpecially Clemens of Rome, who is mentioned by Paul. Indeed its authenticity was never called in queſtion in any early age.

No books whatever were ſo properly and effectually *published* as the goſpels, and this book of Acts. Indeed all the *facts* of which they contain an account may be ſaid to have been publiſhed long before the books were written. For the *preaching of the gospel* by the apoſtles conſiſted no doubt chiefly of their reciting the particulars of the life of Chriſt; of which they were the appointed witneſſes; ſo that the goſpels contain the ſubject of their preaching, which commenced immediately after the deſcent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecoſt. There was, therefore, the beſt opportunity of examining into the truth of every thing that they related. And had the written goſpels, when they were publiſhed, been found to differ from what was known to thouſands to have been related by the apoſtles, it could not fail to have been obſerved, and of courſe the books would have loſt all credit.

Theſe goſpels and the book of Acts being ſimilar to the Pentateuch, and other books of the Old Teſtament, which contain a hiſtory of the Jewiſh religion, were immediately read by chriſtians in all places of public worſhip, which were open to enemies as well as friends. Was it poſſible, then, for theſe books to be ſo generally known, while ſo many thouſands of perſons perfectly

well acquainted with the tranſactions recorded in them had never heard of the particulars contained in them, and be handed down as they have been to us, without any contradiction; and when both the friends and the enemies of chriſtianity were equally intereſted to diſcover the truth.

2. It is evident from this paſſage, as well as numberleſs others in the New Teſtament, that our Saviour did not teach, or work miracles, by any power of *his own*. It is here ſaid that it was *by the holy ſpirit*, or the power of God, the ſame power which, according to his promiſe, was afterwards communicated to the apoſtles, and by which they were enabled, as he had told them, to perform miracles equal to his.

4. They were no more to diſperſe to their ſeveral occupations, as they ſeem to have done after his reſurrection.

5. If we may ſuppoſe that there was any analogy between the manner of adminiſtering theſe two *baptisms*, as they are called, viz. that of ſpirit and that of water, the water in the latter caſe muſt have been thrown upon them in baptiſm, and dipping, or plunging, could not have been neceſſary. For the emblem of the deſcent of the ſpirit was a flame of fire, which deſcended upon each of them. I cannot help thinking that this ſprinkling of water muſt have been uſed when great numbers were baptized by a ſingle perſon, and for this they would have a precedent in the conduct of Moſes, who is ſaid to have ſprinkled the book of the law, and all the people.

6. We ſee how ſtrongly the apoſtles retained the idea of the temporal reign of the Meſſiah. Jeſus, not thinking it a proper time for their information, gave only a general anſwer to their queſtion. Indeed, he plainly gave them to underſtand that he was not able to give them a particular anſwer; the time of his future coming to take poſſeſſion of his kingdom, at which time he will raiſe the dead and judge the world, not being communicated even to himſelf, but being known to the Father only, as he had expreſsly told them once before.

8. It was the proper qualification of the apoſtles that they ſhould be the moſt competent witneſſes of the life, the death, and the reſurrection of Chriſt. In common with other chriſtians they were endued with the holy ſpirit; but it was peculiar to them to have the power of conferring it upon others, by the impoſition of their hands.

10. It is probable, from the circumſtances here mentioned, that the aſcent of Jeſus was leiſurely, ſo that all who were preſent might obſerve it very diſtinctly.

11. As there is no appearance of any figure of ſpeech in what the angels here ſay, as our Saviour himſelf ſaid that he ſhould return in *the clouds of heaven*, with power and great glory; and the apoſtle ſays that at the reſurrection the living and the dead ſhall be *caught up together to meet the Lord in the air*. There can hardly be any doubt but that Jeſus will return literally as he aſcended, ſo as to be firſt viſible in the air. Whether that will be the theatre of the general judgment, when

the righteous ſhall be ſeparated from the wicked, we are not informed.

14. This is the laſt time that the mother of Jeſus is mentioned; and it is without any particular diſtinction or reſpect. That ſhe ſhould afterwards come to be idolized, and divine honours be paid to her, as is done in the church of Rome at this day, is not a little extraordinary. But it naturally followed the making a God of her ſon, and paying him divine honours; and the whole ſyſtem of this *chriſtian idolatry* roſe naturally from the principles of philoſophy and heatheniſm, which prevailed at the time of the promulgation of chriſtianity.

16. Tho' Peter probably imagined that David, or the ſpirit of God ſpeaking by him referred to the caſe of Judas, it does not ſeem probable that the paſſage here quoted had that original reference, but that it was peculiarly ſuitable to the caſe of Judas, ſo as to induce the apoſtles to take their meaſures in purſuance of it: When they did proceed to act from this principle, in the choice of another apoſtle, they were not endued with any miraculous power, or, as far as appears, acted by any divine direction. It would, however, appear afterwards, as no doubt it did, that Matthias was a proper apoſtle, having the peculiar powers of one.

Ch. II. 1. Jeſus being aſcended into heaven, the apoſtles and other diſciples continued, according to his directions at Jeruſalem, ſpending their time much together, in acts of devotion, eſpecially frequenting the temple, like other devout Jews. But this could only be for the ſpace of ten days. For Jeſus appeared to them

them during forty days after his reſurrection, and only fifty days intervened between the Paſſover and Pentecoſt, from which it derives its name. We call it *Whitſuntide*, and the ſeaſon of Paſſover, *Easter*.

At this feaſt of Pentecoſt, immediately following the paſſover at which Jeſus was crucified, and after which he roſe from the dead, the proper promulgation of the goſpel commenced, and it was wiſely appointed in the courſe of divine providence, that every thing relating to the publication of it ſhould be attended with the fulleſt evidence, nothing, as the apoſtle Paul afterwards obſerved, being done in a corner. At the time, therefore, of this public feſtival, one of the three, on which all the Jews who were of age were required to give their attendance at Jeruſalem, and to which numbers of other Jews from all parts of the world voluntarily reſorted, the apoſtles, our Lord's ſucceſſors, were endued with the holy ſpirit in a manner the moſt conſpicuous and illuſtrious.

1. Chronologers have computed that this was probably the firſt day of the week, or the Lord's day, the day on which Jeſus roſe from the dead, and on which he ſeems to have made his principal appearances to the apoſtles afterwards. It is no wonder, therefore, that this day ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by chriſtians by this peculiar appellation, and that on this day they ſhould hold their aſſemblies for public worſhip: tho' for a long time all chriſtians held aſſemblies for the ſame purpoſe on the Jewiſh Sabbath, or Saturday; all the Jewiſh chriſtians, naturally and properly having continued their

their former cuſtoms, and the Gentile chriſtians following their example.

It is remarkable that it was about the time of Pentecoſt that the law of Moſes was given from mount Sinai, in the moſt ſolemn and public manner, before the whole nation of the Jews. But in fact the effuſion of the ſpirit upon the apoſtles and other chriſtians on this day of Pentecoſt was an event more fully authenticated than that of the promulgation of the law of Moſes, as this was known in the firſt inſtance to perſons from all parts of the world, who would of courſe mention the extraordinary particulars at their return to their reſpective countries; and this would, no doubt, prepare the minds of many for the reception of the goſpel, when it was preached to them afterwards.

The *all* here mentioned were probably the *hundred and twenty* ſpoken of before.

2. It is probable that this *ſound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind*, was perceived on the outſide of the houſe, and that this might occaſion the great concourſe of people who were ſo ſoon drawn together.

3. This was probably ſome thing ſimilar to the viſible appearance attending the deſcent of the ſpirit upon our Saviour.

4. It is not perhaps poſſible to imagine any thing more indiſputably miraculous than ſpeaking intelligibly in a language that a perſon has not learned. In this reſpect it will probably be thought to exceed any miracle exhibited by Jeſus himſelf, and therefore may be ſaid to be in part a fulfillment of his promiſe to the apoſtles, that they ſhould do *greater things than he had done*

done; tho' his meaning might be, that they would extend the knowledge of the goſpel farther, and make more converts, than he ſhould do.

This miracle of the gift of tongues ſeems to have been very common in the age of the apoſtles, but it does not appear to have been given for any particular uſe, as for that of preaching the goſpel in foreign nations, &c. but merely to anſwer the purpoſe of any other temporary miracle, being the moſt indiſputable proof of the preſence of God with the preachers of the goſpel.

7. It was ſufficiently known that the apoſtles, and the other perſons who were aſſembled on this occaſion, were natives of Judea, and chiefly of Galilee, and it is probable that they had none of them ever been out of the country. And there could not be more proper judges of their ſpeaking the languages correctly, than the natives of the country in which they were ſpoken.

11. Tho' the natives of theſe countries did not ſpeak languages radically different from each other, they probably differed ſo much, that they could not without particular inſtruction converſe together.

13. Theſe were probably Jews of Jeruſalem, who, not underſtanding any of the foreign languages ſpoken by the company, thought that they were uttering inarticulate ſounds.

15. This was our nine o'clock in the morning, at which time it was ſo unuſual in this part of the world for any perſon to be found drinking to exceſs, that the very mention of the circumſtance appears to be ſufficient to confute the ſuggeſtion. It is alſo ſaid that on

theſe

theſe public feſtivals the Jews generally abſtained from eating or drinking till the afternoon.

17. The *latter days* or the *laſt times*, in the ancient prophets, are commonly ſuppoſed to refer to the time of the goſpel in general; tho' many of the paſſages clearly refer to a period not yet come, viz. the return of the Jews to their own country, or thoſe glorious times when *the kingdoms of the world ſhall become the kingdoms of God and of Chriſt*.

20. This ſeems to refer to the time of the deſolation of Judea, and the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which our Lord foretold in language ſimilar to this.

Ch. II. 22. We are now attending to the important hiſtory of the firſt promulgation of the goſpel, after the deſcent on the day of Pentecoſt. I have obſerved that a clearer evidence of ſupernatural power could not perhaps be given them by perſons ſpeaking languages which they had not been taught, that this could not be the effects of intoxication, needs no arguing. Beſides, what theſe perſons delivered in theſe languages were ſentences expreſſive of the praiſes of God. This miracle may be likewiſe conſidered as emblematical of the reception of the goſpel by people of all nations and languages. In the idea of Peter, it was a literal accompliſhment of a prophecy of Joel, concerning God's pouring out his ſpirit upon all fleſh in the latter days, which prophecy he recited at full length.

We ſee upon this and many other ſimilar occaſions, how converſant the Jews were with their ſcriptures, ſo that they could quote and apply them on all occaſions. This ready quoting from memory, will account for their

their frequently giving the general ſenſe, and not the exact words of ſcripture, and likewiſe for their frequently fancying that particular paſſages of ſcripture had an original reference to any circumſtances to which they might be *applied*. As the ſcriptures were always upon their minds, they would often be ſtruck with analogies of this kind, and would naturally enough be apt to lay too much ſtreſs upon them.

22. It is impoſſible not to obſerve that Peter, meaning no doubt in his circumſtances, to ſpeak of his maſter in the higheſt terms, only ſays, that he was *a man approved of God, by miraculous works which God did by him*. Certainly, therefore, he had no higher idea of him than he here expreſſes, and leaſt of all could he ſuppoſe that he was properly God. Had he even conſidered his maſter as being of an angelic or ſuper angelic nature, he would hardly have ſpoken ſo degradingly of him; as to call him merely a *man*, and to ſay that he performed his miracles by no power of his own, but by the immediate power of God acting by him. Had our Saviour been the creator of the world, as ſome ſuppoſe, and had he originally and naturally powers equal to it, his power of working miracles muſt have been as much *his own*, as that of ſpeaking and walking is ours, and tho' it is true we cannot perform theſe natural functions without power derived originally from God, yet God is not therefore ſaid to ſpeak or act by us. God therefore being ſaid to act by Chriſt, clearly implies that he had not *naturally*, or in his proper nature, any power of doing ſuch things. And if, as Peter here ſays, and our Saviour himſelf before him, God really did the works

works, no extraordinary inſtrument or medium was neceſſary. A man approved of God for that purpoſe was all that was requiſite. Beſides there was certainly a propriety in his being a man like ourſelves, who was ſent on this meſſage from God to man, and eſpecially one who was to exhibit an example of a proper reſurrection of man from the dead.

23 According to the Arabic verſion, it is *when ye had mocked, ye slew him.* W.

We ſee that notwithſtanding it was foreſeen and foreordained of God, that Chriſt ſhould die in the manner that he did; yet the wickedneſs of his murderers was not the leſs on that account. Guilt ariſes from bad paſſions and bad views and from theſe the Phariſees and Rulers of the Jews certainly acted.

24. This impoſſibility of Chriſt continuing in the power of death could not ariſe from any natural power that he had of reſiſting death, but from the determination of God, expreſſed by our Saviour himſelf.

30. The clauſe, *according to the flesh raise up Christ*, is not in many MSS. nor acknowledged by ſeveral of the antient verſions. W.

32. According to all appearance, and the natural conſtruction of the paſſage, in the pſalm that is here quoted, David thought of no other than himſelf when he compared it; expreſſing his confidence that God would not deliver him up to the power of his enemies, to be put to death by them. But the paſſage being more literally applicable to the caſe of our Saviour, Peter ſuppoſed that there was an original reference to it. It is not however, neceſſary that, as chriſtians, we ſhould

conſider

conſider Peter as ſpeaking by divine inſpiration on this occaſion; and he might very naturally imagine that in the paſſage he quoted there was an alluſion to the caſe of our Saviour when there was not. In all ſuch caſes, as theſe we muſt judge for ourſelves, as well as he.

34. It is plain that Peter conſidered David as not being in heaven, but only in the grave, after he was dead, waiting for a happy reſurrection in God's own time, when we ourſelves, tho' dying later, ſhall riſe together with Peter, and all who have gone before us viz. when Chriſt ſhall return, and take all his faithful followers to himſelf, that *where he is there they may be alſo.*

36. That is, a proper king, tho' not ſuch an one as we vainly promiſed ourſelves, the proper Meſſiah of the Jews.

39. To your moſt diſtant poſterity. W.

By *thoſe who were afar off*, we might naturally think that Peter meant the Gentiles; but at that time he had no idea of the goſpel being intended for them: He only meant the Jews who were diſperſed in remote countries, or proſelytes to Judaiſm.

41. Many of theſe, no doubt, had been diſcouraged, and diſperſed, by his unexpected death. Beſides thoſe who actually joined themſelves to this new formed chriſtian ſociety by baptiſm, there muſt alſo have been great numbers who thought well of chriſtianity, tho' they had not the courage openly to avow it.

42. as the *breaking of bread* is here joined with prayer, it is probable that the rite of the Lord's ſupper here referred to.

43. At

43. At this time the high prieſts and rulers who had crucified Jeſus, and who had enjoyed their triumph over him, were perplexed, and overawed ſeeing the cauſe of Chriſt reviving, and even becoming popular.

44. This muſt be underſtood, we ſhall find, with ſome limitations. It could only mean an uncommon degree of liberality, which was of particular value at that ſeaſon, when a great proportion of the converts were poor. For Ananias and Sapphira were under no obligation to ſell their eſtate, or to give any part of the price of it. It was altogether a voluntary act.

47. The people with whom the new converts *had favour* muſt have been thoſe who thought well of Chriſt, but did not openly avow themſelves chriſtians; while thoſe who are ſaid to have been *added to the church* were baptized. The phraſe *ſuch as ſhould be ſaved* or *the ſaved*, as it might have been rendered, is only ſynonimous to *chriſtians*; as Paul ſays 1 Cor. i, 18. *to us who are ſaved*, that is to us chriſtians, *Chriſt crucified is the power of God and the wiſdom of God.* Chriſtians are called *ſaved*, as having the goſpel, which is the means or inſtrument of ſalvation. But you need not be informed that many perſons have this inſtrument, and yet powerful and efficacious as it is, make no uſe of it, and will be ſo far from being finally ſaved, that their condemnation will be aggravated by it. To derive any advantage from chriſtianity, we muſt give diligent attention to it, and regulate our lives by it, having the precepts and promiſes of it in frequent contemplation. Without this it is impoſſible that it ſhould have any real influence over us, ſo as to make us *other perſons* than we ſhould

ſhould have been without it, that is *mere men of the world*, having our views terminating in this life, without giving a juſt preference to the life which is to come.

Let it be our endeavour to be chriſtians in all the proper forms of a chriſtian ſociety, as by the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, which in the time we are now reading of was certainly univerſal with thoſe who pretended to be chriſtians at all; but more eſpecially, let us be careful to paſs from the *form* to the *ſubſtance*.

Ch. III. As it is not very probable that after the effuſion of the holy ſpirit, or the communication of miraculous powers to the apoſtles, (from which we may date their proper commiſſion to preach the goſpel, and to ſucceed to the office and the powers of Chriſt on earth) they continued long without exerciſing them, and preaching with the authority which they derived from them, we may ſafely conclude that the tranſactions mentioned in this chapter followed ſoon after thoſe that are recited in the preceding. We may therefore preſume that they took place during the ſame public feſtival of pentecoſt, while Jeruſalem continued to be crouded with viſitors from all parts of the world.

1 Pious Jews in general had *three* ſeaſons of prayer in the courſe of the day, at noon, as well as at the time of morning and evening ſacrifice. Thus David ſays, *at morning, at evening, and at noon will I pray and give thanks*. It was Daniel's cuſtom alſo to pray three times with his face directed to Jeruſalem, and Peter, we ſhall find praying at noon, when he was ſent for by Cornelius. It muſt be obſerved, however, that prayers which

were ſo frequent could not be of long continuance, ſo as to interfere with the proper buſineſs of the day.

3. I have before obſerved that there could not be a more proper ſubject of a miracle of a public and unqueſtionable nature than a public beggar, ſuch perſons, and their caſes, being the moſt generally known.

6. Had Jeſus been an impoſtor, and had there been a probability of gaining wealth, power, or fame, by any thing that he taught, why did not the apoſtles (who muſt have been in the ſecret of the impoſture, and who, upon this ſcheme, muſt have been poſſeſſed of advantages ſuperior to thoſe of Jeſus himſelf, having known all that he did) ſpeak and act in their own name, now that he was out of the way, and had no power of controuling them. On the contrary, we ſee that all of them in the midſt of the greateſt hardſhips and perſecution, and often differing among themſelves, perſiſted to act in the name of a crucified maſter, and by authority derived from him. And yet the apoſtles were not men void of ambition; and before the death of Jeſus they were frequently contending among themſelves *who ſhould be the greateſt.*

11. This was a magnificent portico, built originally by Solomon, to ſupport which he raiſed immenſe ſtone buttreſſes from the very bottom of the valley which ſeparated the hill of Moria, on which the temple ſtood, from the mount of Olives. This immenſe work which is particularly deſcribed by Joſephus, was all that remained of the temple of Solomon in his time; but even of this nothing is remaining at this day.

12 It

12. It was a maxim with the Jews, that if a man was a *sinner*, and especially an impostor, God would not hear him. This gave the man who had been blind from his birth so much advantage in his argument with the Jewish rulers, *we know*, says he, *that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a doer of his will, him he heareth.*

15. In this Peter might allude to the character of the Messiah (as he would probably understand it to be) in the prophet Isaiah, which as we translate it is *the eternal Father*, but as it may be rendered *the Father*, (that is the author) *of eternity* or the giver of eternal life, which Christ, by a power derived from God, bestows upon his faithful followers.

17. It was true that the Jews were ignorant that Jesus was the Messiah, and this opinion even the disciples of Jesus gave up at the time of his death. But all the Jews had evidence enough of his being a prophet, or a person sent of God, and therefore their guilt in putting him to death admits of no apology. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah when he was solemnly abjured by the high priest; and this claim, from a person who had a divine mission, sufficiently proved by unquestionable miracles, should not have been deemed false and blasphemous. But they were at that time under the dominion of their passions; their envy and malice, and would not listen to reason.

21. We see here that Christ is not to return, but to continue in the place that is called *heaven*, or the more immediate presence of God, till the general resurrection,

which excludes all idea of a perſonal reign upon earth before that time.

22 Moſes, encouraging the Jews to look to God, and not as other nations did to witches and wizzards, and the arts of necromancy, tells them that God would provide them with prophets *like to himself, of their own brethren.* As he uſes the word *prophet*, and as Chriſt bore a nearer reſemblance to Moſes than any other of the prophets (acting as it were with a more direct commiſſion from God) it has been imagined that this paſſage had an original reference to Chriſt, and Peter ſeems to have thought ſo. But whether this was the caſe or not, the paſſage is very properly quoted on this occaſion. For whether Chriſt was the Meſſiah, or ſimply a prophet, that is a perſon bearing a divine commiſſion, the Jews ſubjected themſelves to juſt puniſhment by rejecting him.

Since Peter does apply this paſſage to Chriſt, it is plain that he conſidered him, with reſpect to his *nature*, as of the ſame rank with other prophets, *one of their brethren*, deſcended from Abraham, or a man like themſelves, and not God, or a ſuper-angelic being.

24. We find no prophecy concerning Chriſt in Samuel. But when the Jews ſpake of their prophets in general, they naturally mention Samuel, as the firſt of their prophets who was a writer after Moſes.

25. By the *children*, or diſciples *of the prophets*, we are to underſtand thoſe who had the benefit of their inſtructions, and who profeſſed to believe and obey them.

26 This

26. This preference we find given to the Jews, that Chriſt was deſcended from them, and for ſome time the goſpel was preached to them only. But upon their rejecting it, it was preached to the Gentiles, tho' no doubt it would have been ſo if this had not happened. It pleaſed God, however, that this favour ſhould be granted to the Gentiles by way of puniſhment for the incredulity and obſtinacy of the Jews. But, as the apoſtle ſays, if we be gainers by the unbelief of the Jews, how much more ſhall we be ſo by their converſion. The former event was followed by a partial converſion of the Gentiles; but the latter, we are informed, will be attended with the converſion of the whole world. Then *the fullness of the Gentiles*, as it is called, *will be come in*, and *there will be one sheepfold, and one shepherd.*

Ch. IV. A miracle of ſo public a nature as that which is recorded in the preceding chapter, I mean the cure of a man who had been lame from his birth, performed in open day, in the preſence of great numbers; a miracle of ſuch a nature as that there could be no ſuſpicion of colluſion or artifice with reſpect to it, could not fail to make a great impreſſion upon the people, and muſt have exceedingly irritated the Jewiſh prieſts and rulers who had ſo lately put Jeſus to death, and who no doubt took it for granted that they ſhould hear no more of him. Accordingly we have in this chapter an account of their proceedings in conſequence of it, which ſhews that they were extremely irritated; but like every other oppoſition to the ſpread of the goſpel, to this day, whether art or power was employed for the pur-

poſe, it operated to its furtherance, and firmer eſtabliſhment.

1. The Sadducees muſt have been more particularly offended at the teſtimony which the apoſtles gave to the reſurrection of Jeſus, when they diſbelieved a reſurrection in general, and many of theſe perſons were rich, and in the higheſt offices of the ſtate. This Annas appears from Joſephus to have been a Sadducee, but it is probable that few, if any, of the common people were of this ſect; which ſufficiently proves that the doctrine of a reſurrection was the ancient faith of the Jewiſh nation, the common people being in all caſes the leaſt apt to adopt new opinions, while the rich who can afford the expence of a liberal education, and will therefore be moſt diſpoſed to ſpeculate, are the moſt ſubject to make innovations.

4. The evidence of a divine power *accompanying* the preaching of the apoſtles, muſt have been very ſtriking indeed to have made ſuch an impreſſion upon *Jews*, who are ſo remarkably averſe to the idea of ſuch a Meſſiah as Jeſus was declared to be; an idea to which the apoſtles themſelves were originally as averſe as any others. Indeed, we have no inſtance of any prejudice ſo deeply fixed as this of the Jews relating to the temporal reign of their Meſſiah, ſo that nothing but the moſt unexceptionable evidence could have overcome it. Never, therefore, were men leſs previouſly diſpoſed to receive any thing than the Jews of this age were to embrace chriſtianity; and yet great numbers of them, at its firſt promulgation, did embrace, it

and

and riſqued their fortunes and their lives by their adherence to it.

After the death of Jeſus we find the hundred and twenty profeſſed diſciples aſſembled together at Jeruſalem, but there was no doubt a much greater number in Galilee and other places. After the deſcent of the holy ſpirit on the day of Pentecoſt, the profeſſed diſciples were three thouſand. We now find them to be five thouſand men, excluſive of women; and perhaps theſe five thouſand are to be added to the former number of three thouſand.

6. As Luke ſays that both Annas and Caiaphas were high prieſts in the year of our Lord's miniſtry, there might have been no real change of the high-prieſt after the paſſover on which he was crucified. Probably Caiaphas, who was ſon in law to Annas, was the proper or nominal high-prieſt; but Annas might be the perſon who had the moſt real power. Jeſus was led to the houſe of Annas, before he was conducted to that of Caiaphas.

7. It was an opinion among the Jews, and prevails in the Eaſt to this day, that wonderful things may be performed by the pronouncing of *certain words*, in a certain manner, the powers of ſome inviſible agents neceſſarily accompanying ſuch words. For this purpoſe they invoked the names of particular perſons who had been ſuppoſed to be endued with thoſe powers, as if thoſe inviſible powers which had been at their command, would be at the command of thoſe who made uſe of their names. For this purpoſe that of Solomon is made uſe of in the Eaſt to this very day, and his name is inſcribed on what they call their *Taliſmans*,

by the poſſeſſion and uſe of which they ſuppoſe that the greateſt things may be atchieved. Thus ſome of the later Jews have ſaid that Jeſus worked his miracles by means of the name of God inſcribed in ſome particular manner on a tablet, which he found in the temple. Alluding to theſe notions, Peter here ſays that it was by *the name of Jeſus of Nazareth*, whom they had crucified, or by thoſe powers which had been communicated to him, and which were now transferred from him to them, that the cure at which they were ſo much ſurprized had been performed.

11. This alluſion Jeſus himſelf had made, and applied to his own caſe. You will find it made uſe of in thoſe ſolemn and awful warnings which he delivered in the temple in the week in which he died.

12. i. e. No ſuch cures are wrought by any other power. For ſo the words ought to have been rendered. Thus the woman who touched the garment of Jeſus ſaid that ſhe was perſuaded that, if ſhe could only touch that, ſhe ſhould be ſaved. For there the ſame word which is here rendered *ſaved* is tranſlated *made whole*, or *cured*.

13. There is ſomething ſurprizing in the boldneſs of the apoſtles ſo very ſoon after the conſternation into which they had been thrown on the death of their maſter, which it muſt be peculiarly difficult to account for on the ſuppoſition that they had no perſuaſion concerning his reſurrection. Had they thought him to be ſtill dead, their deſpair would certainly have continued, and they would have diſperſed. Leaſt of all can it be ſuppoſed that they would all of them not only get a courage

they

they had never had before, but likewiſe agree in the ſame confident ground of their faith and hope. To account for this, there is no occaſion to ſuppoſe any proper miraculous influence upon their minds, inſpiring them with courage, but only a knowledge of the facts of which they were witneſſes, and the extraordinary powers with which they were conſcious that they were endued. The aſcenſion of their maſter into heaven, would ſatisfy them that their idea of his *temporal reign* was a miſtake; and the full conviction they had of his reſurrection, and his favour with God, together with their being employed to ſucceed him, in carrying on the great ends of his miſſion, would convince them that there was a much more glorious kingdom of Chriſt, in which they were to ſhare, to take place hereafter. This, and the recollection of what Jeſus had hinted to them to the ſame purpoſe, would be ſufficient to make them overlook all their temporal proſpects; keeping in view thoſe that were eternal.

16. It is remarkable that the Jews, in the time of our Saviour and of the apoſtles, did not deny the reality of their miracles. They only aſcribed them to a different cauſe. But as they were the beſt judges of the *facts*, and we are ſatisfied that their idea of the *cauſe*, viz. the power of dæmons, or charms, is altogether inſufficient to acount for the facts (and as we are ſatisfied that the powers of nature cannot be controuled except by the author of nature) we have at this day all the reaſon that we can have to acknowledge that Chriſt and the apoſtles had a divine miſſion.

22 He

22. He had therefore been long known, and his caſe muſt have been conſidered as hopeleſs and incapable of being relieved by any natural remedies, had there been time and opportunity to apply them, which is evident in this caſe there was not.

26. The ſecond Pſalm, which is here quoted, is remarkably applicable to the firſt promulgation of the goſpel, tho' it related originally to David and his poſterity only. It is ſaid that the Jews in general conſidered this pſalm as prophetical of the Meſſiah.

32. Tho' the poſſeſſions continued to be *their own*, their love to each other was ſo great, that they freely imparted to all who had need, as if they had been held in common. If their riches were in things immovable, as in lands, they ſold them, in order to have it more in their power to diſtribute to thoſe who were in want.

33. To bear witneſs of the reſurrection of Jeſus, was the great object of the apoſtolic office. And tho' the Jews in general acknowledged the miracles of Jeſus, of which indeed themſelves were witneſſes, other evidence of this particular event was neceſſary.

By *great grace being upon them*, is to be underſtood their being in great favour with the common people, who had not the motives with their rulers to oppoſe chriſtianity, tho' they had not the courage to make an open profeſſion of it.

36. Tho' the Levites, as a tribe, had no diviſion of the land of Judea allotted to them, but were maintained by tithes; yet individuals of them were not debarred from

from having property, either in Judea, or other countries.

Ch. V. We have ſeen that from a ſpirit of unbounded generoſity, and without any proper moral obligation to it, the richer of the firſt converts to chriſtianity, at leaſt many of them, gave all they had to the common ſtock appropriated to the relief of their brethren, who in general were poor. A greater proof than this they could not have given of their firm belief of chriſtianity, or of their diſintereſted principles in embracing it. Men of ſiniſter views would never have done thus much. Their conduct, therefore, is an argument of their full conviction of the truth of the goſpel, and of their looking for no reward in this life, but only *at the reſurrection of the juſt.*

Of this circumſtance, however, we have now an account of two perſons taking advantage, by pretending to have given to the public ſtock all that they had, or at leaſt the whole of ſome particular poſſeſſion, or eſtate, which they had ſold, thinking perhaps that beſides acquiring the reputation of generoſity, in common with Barnabas, and others mentioned before, they ſhould alſo have a ſhare in the common diſtribution, as having given their *all.* But it pleaſed divine providence in a peculiarly awful manner to detect this fraud, to ſhew that the church, it its infant ſtate, was under the immediate direction of God.

3, All *evil*, in a figurative way of ſpeaking, is ſaid to ariſe from the influence of Satan, or the devil, as if this was a real inviſible being, of great power and univerſal preſence, the rival, as it were, of God himſelf. But as this

this is never ſuppoſed to be any excuſe for any wickedneſs of which men are guilty, it is plain that ſuch language could only be uſed as a figure of ſpeech, and that the evil was never really thought to have any other ſource than the ungoverned paſſions of men. Peter in this caſe is far from conſidering Ananias as leſs guilty upon account of *Satan having filled his heart*. On the contrary, this is the very thing with which he reproaches him. The aggravation of his guilt was that he attempted to deceive or impoſe upon, not the apoſtles, but the holy ſpirit, by which they were guided. This therefore ſeems to be a caſe of *blaſphemy againſt the ſpirit*, of which our Saviour ſpake, as of an offence that would not be forgiven.

6. It was uſual with the Jews, as we have ſeen in the caſe of Lazarus, to bury perſons on the ſame day that they died.

13. i. e. None ventured to join themſelves to the body of chriſtians with a ſiniſter view, as Ananias and Sapphira had done, but they were all ſincere believers, and had upright views.

17. This was Annas, or Annanus, whoſe family, according to Joſephus, were Sadducees, the moſt inveterate enemies of chriſtianity.

19. This was a miracle of a peculiarly public nature, and muſt have made a great impreſſion upon the people, as we find it did. There was no evidence of any force having been uſed to effect this eſcape. The priſon doors were found ſhut, and locked after them, and the keepers in their proper ſtation, knowing nothing of the matter.

26. The

26. The chriſtians were now popular again, as Jeſus generally was with the common people, who were convinced that the preſence or power of God was with them for ſome purpoſe or other, tho' they might not diſtinctly perceive what.

31. i. e. True religion, which contains the doctrine of forgiveneſs of ſin upon true repentance, was to be preached under the name of chriſtianity, as the ſame doctrine had before been taught as an article of the Jewiſh religion.

32. By the *holy ſpirit* is here meant thoſe *miraculous powers* by which they had been releaſed from their late impriſonment.

33. They might ſee that it was in vain to put the apoſtles in priſon, from which they had been releaſed in ſo miraculous a manner, and therefore they did not attempt it again. But as, notwithſtanding the ſame miraculous power, they had actually effected the death of Jeſus, they might think that it would alſo be in their power to put the apoſtles to death. Tho', however, it was the will of God that they ſhould have that power over Jeſus, he did not think proper that the apoſtles ſhould be put to death at that time.

34. This Gamaliel was an eminent teacher of the law, and of great authority among the Jews, being mentioned by their own writers in that light; and it was he at whoſe feet Paul had been brought up a rigid Phariſee. Gamaliel might poſſibly think that, as the apoſtles had unqueſtionably the power of working miracles, God might by their means be preparing the way for a deliverance of the Jews from their ſubjection to the Romans,

Romans, and thus, tho' in a manner unexpected to themſelves, haſten the coming of the Meſſiah. In this ſtate of uncertainty, he naturally and prudently adviſes his brethren to wait the iſſue of this buſineſs. Had the apoſtles promiſed that their maſter would return again, and deliver Iſrael, or appear in ſuch a character as the Jews in general wiſhed their Meſſiah to do, they would have had no objection to him. It was not the perſon of Jeſus (tho' they could not well reconcile themſelves to Nazareth the place of his birth) but his character, and pretenſions, that they diſliked.

36. This Theudas, who is not mentioned by any other hiſtorian, was probably one of thoſe who had raiſed diſturbances in Judea after the death of Herod the Great. At that time the Jews diſcovered a peculiarly reſtleſs and turbulent ſpirit, the Roman yoke being then new and galling to them, ſo that they were ready to liſten to any impoſtor that promiſed them deliverance. Another perſon of this name, but after this time, Joſephus ſpeaks of, who promiſed to divide the river Jordan, as a proof of his divine miſſion, for the deliverance of his countrymen.

37. When the Romans reduced Judea to the form of a province of the empire, appointing governors, and levying taxes (which was after the death of Archelaus) the Jewiſh nation brooked it very ill, many of them thinking it even unlawful to ſupport a heathen government. At the head of ſome of theſe appeared Judas of Galilee, whoſe hiſtory is given at length by Joſephus, exactly correſponding to this ſhort account in Luke. Tho' this Judas was cut off, many of the Jews, and probably

probably the great body of them, held the ſame tenets, which at laſt produced an open revolt from the Romans, terminating in the uttter deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the diſperſion of the Jews.

Ch. VI. In conſequence of the large contributions of generous and well diſpoſed perſons to the relief of the poor ſort of chriſtians (than which a more unequivocal proof could not have been given of their full perſuaſion concerning the truth of chriſtianity, and of the certainty of its promiſed rewards in a future world) the apoſtles, who had the care of this large ſtock, found themſelves embarraſſed in the diſtribution of it, pretty much as Moſes had been in his conducting the Iſraelites through the wilderneſs, having by this means more buſineſs upon their hands than they could properly attend to. And we find that they relieved themſelves as Moſes did, by appointing a ſufficient number of perſons to act under them, in matters of a ſecular or inferior nature, while they applied themſelves to the more important duties of their ſtation, as apoſtles, and preachers of the goſpel.

1. Theſe *Grecians* could not be Gentile Greeks, converted to chriſtianity, for as yet the goſpel was preached to Jews only, but to Jews living among the Greeks, and uſing the Greek language, which they did in the ſynagogue worſhip, by the means of the tranſlation of the ſcriptures into Greek. Theſe perſons having, like Barnabas, who was of Cyprus, contributed to the common ſtock, as well as the richer converts in Judea, thought that the poor among them had the ſame right

to

to a diſtribution from the common ſtock with the poor of Judea itſelf. To this, however, it ſhould ſeem, that the Jews in Judea had objected, at leaſt to the proportion which had been claimed, tho' of the ground of this difference we cannot now be judges.

2. By *ſerving tables* we are to underſtand attending to ſecular affairs, for which purpoſe they ſat, and did buſineſs at tables. Thus we read of the tables of the money changers of the temple.

3. i. e. That they were to be endowed both naturally and ſupernaturally being men of good underſtanding and diſcretion, proper for the conduct of buſineſs, and alſo diſtinguiſhed by the miraculous gifts of the ſpirit, which in ſome degree or other, appeared to have been common to all the diſciples in that age. Theſe ſeven perſons are ſometimes called *deacons*, tho' not in the ſcriptures. And their office reſembled that of ſuch deacons as were afterwards appointed in chriſtian churches in ſome particulars only. The perſons here mentioned were eminent preachers of the Goſpel, and are ſometimes called *evangeliſts*. This was not the proper buſineſs of deacons, who were only inferior officers in the church.

5. This Nicholas was the only one of the ſeven who was not a Jew; but he muſt have been a perſon who was circumciſed, and who conformed in all reſpects to the Jewiſh ritual.

6. This *laying on of hands* could only be by way of deſignation to an office, for no ſpiritual gifts are ſaid to have been imparted by it. Before this impoſition of the hands of the apoſtles, theſe men are ſaid to have been

been filled with the holy ſpirit, as well as with wiſdom, proper for their office. Praying for particular perſons was generally accompanied with the impoſition of hands, the perſon who prayed laying his hand upon the head of the perſon for whom he prayed. As this impoſition of hands is ſaid to have followed the prayer, it is poſſible that this might be done by thoſe who could not conveniently do it during the time of prayer, to expreſs their concurrence in the ſervice.

7. The Syriac verſion has *other Jews*, not *prieſts*. W.

In general the prieſts, and other perſons in power and high places, were averſe to chriſtianity; but the evidence of the reſurrection of Jeſus, and of a divine power accompanying the apoſtles, who bore witneſs to it, was ſo great, that notwithſtanding their deep rooted prejudices, we here ſee, that a conſiderable number of theſe prieſts were converted to chriſtianity. In later times a ſimilar proportion of perſons of rank and power, and alſo of men of ſcience and philoſophy, became converts to chriſtianity; there being men of candid and ingenuous diſpoſitions in all ſtations of life, and in *all claſſes*; tho' it cannot be expected that there ſhould be ſo many of them among thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed for wealth, power, or knowledge, to whom ſuch a religion as that of chriſtianity muſt at firſt ſight have appeared very contemptible, and, as they would think, unworthy of them; whereas perſons in leſs conſpicuous ſtations in life, would not be ſo liable to make that objection. The ſame obſervation was illuſtrated at the time of the reformation, perſons in middle ſtations of

life being the firſt to declare themſelves againſt the corruptions of the church of Rome; and ſuch are the perſons who in all caſes have the leaſt difficulty in quitting any eſtabliſhed form of religion, and forming themſelves into new ſects in oppoſition to it, following only the dictates of their own conſciences, without regarding what the world may ſay or think of them, by which we ſee perſons in the upper ranks of life almoſt wholly governed. Whatever theſe may *think*, or inwardly approve, they cannot quit their connections, but muſt *live* and *act* as others do. It is therefore far from being any objection to chriſtianity, that a great majority of the firſt converts were of the lower claſſes of *life*. Such perſons have as good natural underſtandings as their ſuperiors, they have more leiſure to enquire concerning truth, and they have fewer prejudices.

9. The Jews who were inhabitants of diſtant *places* had ſynagogues at Jeruſalem for their proper uſe, when they reſorted thither. For they could not have been edified by attending public worſhip in the ſynagogues of native Jews, as they did not always underſtand the Hebrew or Chaldee language. Theſe *libertines* were thoſe Jews who had been ſlaves, eſpecially at Rome, but who by one means or other had obtained their liberty, and being in ſufficient numbers, might chuſe to have a ſynagogue in Jeruſalem to themſelves. The Roman hiſtorians ſpeak of great numbers, ſome thouſands of them, about this time under the name of *libertini*, or freed-men, being ſent from Rome to Sardinia. Many were carried by Pompey into Italy where they were ſet at liberty, and their children would be called *libertini*.

Agreeably

Agreably to this the Jews that were baniſhed from Rome by Tiberius are ſaid by Tacitus to have been of the libertine race.

11. It was very natural for the Jews, whoſe veneration for Moſes was exceeding great, to conceive that chriſtians, by ſpeaking of Jeſus as ſuperior to Moſes, undervalued their great prophet, and detracted from his authority, and to undervalue, or blaſpheme Moſes, they would naturally conſider as the ſame thing with blaſpheming God.

14. Chriſt, having foretold that Jeruſalem and the temple wold be deſtroyed, it is very poſſible that ſome chriſtians might imagine that this will be effected by Chriſt in perſon, at his ſecond coming which was generally thought to be very near. And tho' at this time no chriſtian thought of abandoning any part of the law of Moſes, or the proper cuſtoms of the Jews, yet the peculiar inſtitutions of chriſtianity (tho' not contrary to any thing in Judaiſm) would naturally be interpreted by the unbelieving Jews as making a change in thoſe cuſtoms which Moſes had delivered to them. Moreover, the Phariſees would conſider the oppoſition that all chriſtians made to their *traditions*, as an oppoſition to the ancient religion.

15. Whether there was any thing ſupernatural in the countenance of Stephen, like that of Moſes when he deſcended from the mount after converſing with God, does not appear. A look expreſſive of cheerfulneſs and courage might be all that was intended to be expreſſed, by ſaying that *his face was as it had been the face of*

an angel, as we meet with ſeveral expreſſions ſimilar to this in Jewiſh writers.

Ch. VII. We have had an account of Stephen, a zealous preacher of the goſpel, being accuſed before the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, as a blaſphemer of the temple and of the law; teaching that Jeſus would deſtroy that celebrated ſtructure, together with the city of Jeruſalem, and change the cuſtoms which Moſes had delivered. He is now called upon to ſpeak in his own defence, which he does much at large, but in an indirect manner. By going over the moſt eſſential part of the Jewiſh hiſtory (thereby ſhewing his belief of it in common with themſelves) he gives them to underſtand *that* the Divine Being, the God of their Fathers, and the giver of their law, was not confined to particular places or cuſtoms, but might, conſiſtently with the tenor of his diſpenſations, introduce that of *the goſpel*, in addition to that of *the law*. He alſo occaſionally forwarns them by the example of their foreſathers, of the riſque they run by their obſtinacy and incredulity. But this alſo he did in an indirect manner only, till the concluſion of his ſpeech.

2. By this he intimated that the favour of God was not confined to the land of Judea, for that God firſt appeared to Abraham when he lived in Chaldea. Charran is in Meſopotamia, to the North of Chaldea, where Abraham and thoſe who accompanied him reſided ſome time before he proceeded to the land that God promiſed him.

3. We are not expreſsly told the reaſon why God called Abraham to leave his country; but it may be collected

collected from circumſtances in the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, that the inhabitants of Chaldea were at that time falling into idolatry, and that the family of Abraham himſelf was infected by it. Joſhua ſays that their fathers worſhipped idols beyond the flood, that is beyond the river Euphrates, or while they reſided in Chaldea, whereas we ſee in the hiſtory of Abraham that the inhabitants of Canaan and Egypt were not at that time idolaters. It appears that even thoſe of the family of Abraham who remained in Meſopotamia had idolatrous rites at the time of Jacob's going thither; but theſe they might have learned from their neighbours after the time of Abraham.

The poſterity of Abraham by Iſaac and Jacob were evidently ſeparated from other nations by a peculiar ritual and form of government, that there might be one nation in the world which ſhould be the repoſitory, as it were, of the true religion, and more eſpecially that they ſhould bear their teſtimony to the great doctrine of the unity, and ſupremacy of the true God, as the Jews do to this day, when even the chriſtian world is fallen into an idolatry ſimilar to that of the heathens, paying divine worſhip to Jeſus Chriſt, the virgin Mary, and innumerable other dead men and women, ſuch as the heathen gods chiefly were.

4. According to Moſes, Terah muſt have lived in Meſopotamia after the departure of Abraham. He had his three ſons Abraham, Nahor, and Haran, when he was ſeventy years old, and Abraham was ſeventy five when he left Meſopotamia, which muſt have been in the one hundred and fortieth year of Terah, and he lived in all

two hundred and five years. But according to the Samaritan copy, which is of equal authority with that of the Jews, Terah lived only one hundred and forty years; and if Abraham was not the eldeſt of the ſons of Terah, he might have been born ſome time after his father was ſeventy years old, ſo that this account of Stephen might be true.

6. The Iſraelites were not in Egypt much more than two hundred years; but the term four hundred years commenced at the date of the prophecy, and ended at the deliverance of the nation from their bondage in Egypt.

8. All this was prior to the law of Moſes, of which the Jews boaſted ſo much.

9. This ſhews that the divine favour was not confined to Judea.

14. The three ſcore and fifteen mentioned here includes the family of Joſeph, for without that they were only ſeventy perſons in all.

16. It is probable that all the twelve patriarchs, as well as Joſeph, were buried in the land of Canaan, in the ſame place, and at the ſame time, viz. at Sichem, after the Iſraelites under Joſhua had taken poſſeſſion of the country. A Jewiſh writer ſpeaks of their ſepulchres being there. But the buryirg place which had belonged to Emmor was bought by Jacob and not by Abraham. That which was bought by Abraham was the cave of Machpelah in Hebron, and had belonged to the ſons of Heth. The fact was either imperfectly recollected by Stephen, or rather the hiſtorian, or there has been ſome alteration in the preſent text in conſequence

quence of tranſcribing. It was in the cave of Machpelah that Jacob and Leah were buried, as well as Abraham and Sarah, Iſaac and Rebecca before them.

22. Being a great prophet, and diſtinguiſhed by many works of a miraculous and ſtupendous nature.

24. Moſes probably ſaw that the Egyptian would have killed the Hebrew, and therefore he took the part of his countryman, and aſſiſted him in killing the Egyptian.

25. It is very poſſible that Moſes might have formed ſome deſign of delivering his brethren, being in ſo diſtinguiſhed a ſituation at the court of Pharaoh, and being a witneſs of their oppreſſion, even before he was divinely appointed for that purpoſe. Or he might have had the intimation in a ſupernatural manner, but this event might have diſconcerted his ſcheme.

30. Conſequently Moſes was fourſcore years old when he undertook the deliverance of his countrymen.

33. To have the feet bare is a mark of reverence in the Eaſt. Thus the prieſts were without ſhoes while they attended the ſervice of the temple, but had their heads covered, which is alſo deemed another token of reverence, which is the reverſe of our cuſtoms.

35. In this Stephen might intend indirectly to reprove the Jews of his day for their obſtinacy, in rejecting Chriſt, who was their true Meſſiah, or deliverer.

37. This prophecy was by Peter and others applied to Chriſt, ſo that to acknowledge Chriſt was not to renounce Moſes.

41. It does not appear that in worſhipping this idol, which was no other than the figure of the Egyptian god

Apis, they meant to worſhip that god, but their own God Jehovah, under the ſame reſemblance, a thing forbidden in the ſecond commandment, but not a crime of ſo heinous a nature as the groſſer kind of idolatry. The feſtival which they inſtituted upon this occaſion they called *a feaſt to Jehovah*.

48. We ſee that one degree of vice and depravity is puniſhed by what may be called a *judicial blindneſs*, in conſequence of which men may be led into greater guilt and of courſe ſeverer puniſhment. The Iſraelites, notwithſtanding the evidence which they had of the ſole divinity of their own God, and his ſuperiority to all the gods of Egypt, retained the idolatrous cuſtoms of that country and worſhipped the hoſt of heaven, or the ſun, moon, and ſtars, and had portable temples, or ſhrines, dedicated to them, even in the wilderneſs, where they were under the immediate guidance of the true God. The figure of a *ſtar* ſhews that the deity which it repreſented was one of the hoſt of heaven. *Remphan*, called *Chiun* in the Old Teſtament, is ſaid to have been the planet Saturn: The worſhip of dead men, which prevailed chiefly among the Greeks and Romans, was not then known.

All this hiſtory recited by Stephen, ſhews the proneneſs of the Jews to infidelity and diſobedience in all former times, and therefore was a proper warning to the Jews of his own day. But had he made ſuch an application of it in a direct manner, it is not probable that he would have been permitted to proceed in his ſpeech ſo far as he did.

We

We ſee by this ſpeech of Stephen how well acquainted he, and probably the Jews in general were with their ſcriptures. They could quote and apply them with the greateſt readineſs upon all occaſions. Let us chriſtians imitate their example, and take pains to make our children as well acquainted with the ſcriptures as theirs were. The books of ſcripture are now more extenſive, and conſequently more valuable than they were in the time of Stephen. We ought therefore to prize them the more, and make the more uſe of them; and we ſhall be much more blame worthy if we do not.

Stephen, in his defence againſt the charge of *blaſpheming Moſes*, and introducing cuſtoms contrary to thoſe appointed by him, briefly goes over as I have obſerved, the hiſtory of the Jews, and of the Moſaic diſpenſation, and in the courſe of his ſpeech he takes the opportunity of noticing many inſtances of obſtinacy and diſobedience in the Jews of former times, as a warning to thoſe before whom he was ſpeaking.

44. The temple, to which the Jews in the time of Stephen were ſo ſuperſtitiouſly attached, had no being ſeveral hundred years after the time of Moſes. It might therefore be infered that, as God was acceptably worſhipped before the creation of that celebrated ſtructure, he might alſo be ſo without it.

45. *Jeſus*, which is the ſame word in Greek with *Joſhua* in Hebrew, ſignifies *Saviour*; but that Joſhua who ſucceeded Moſes, was intended to be a type of Jeſus, does not appear. In ſome reſpects, indeed, their characters and their offices bear a reſemblance to each other

other, as that Joſhua put the Jews in poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, and Jeſus will put all his faithful followers in poſſeſſion of what is called the *heavenly Canaan*. But no ſerious ſtreſs is to be laid on ſuch reſemblances, or types, as theſe.

48. This part of the ſpeech of Stephen is evidently calculated to leſſen the ſuperſtitious reſpect which the Jews of that day had for their temple. According to their law, they were to pray looking towards that building, or the place where it ſtood, as it were to remind the Divine Being of his promiſes reſpecting that country, and the final ſettlement of the Iſraelites in it; but the ſucceſs of their prayers did not at all depend upon that circumſtance; and with reſpect to us Gentiles there is no fixed place to which we are to have reſpect in our devotions. In all places God, who *is a ſpirit, is* acceptably worſhiped, *if* it be *in ſpirit and in truth*. The bowing, or worſhipping, towards the Eaſt, in the devotions of ſome chriſtians, was a pretty early inſtance of ſuperſtition, but ſhould not for that reaſon be continued.

51. Stephen, having till this part of his ſpeech, only *indirectly* cenſured his judges, had been ſuffered to proceed ſo far without interruption. But now that he comes to a pointed and ſevere application to what he had ſaid, comparing the Jews of this day to thoſe of preceding ages, they were not able to bear it.

53. There is no particular mention of angels being employed in giving the law of Moſes, except they be intended by thoſe *Saints* with whom, in his bleſſing of the twelve tribes, he ſays that *God came* (Deut xxxii. 2)

the

the Lord came from Sinai; he came with ten thousand of Saints. From his right hand went a fiery law for them. Alſo David ſays Pſalm LXVIII, 17. *The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands. The Lord is among them, as in Sinai in the holy place.* From this language, however, which is perhaps only figurative, came the idea which was common to the Jews and the apoſtles, that the law was given by the inſtrumentality of *Angels*, as an order of beings diſtinct from *man*. For in the language of ſcripture whatever God makes uſe of is ſometimes called his *angel*, or *meſſenger*. As when the Pſalmiſt ſays, *He maketh the winds his angels, and flames of fire his miniſters;* for thus the verſe ought to be rendered.

Admitting, however, that the law was given by angels, it is plain that it could not be given by Chriſt, whom ſome think to have been the medium of all the divine communications to man from the beginning of the world. For the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews expreſsly diſtinguiſhes Chriſt from thoſe beings that are called *angels*, and gives reaſons why the Saviour of man ſhould be a *man*, and not an *angel*.

55. This *glory of God* which Stephen ſaw, was probably a luminous appearance, ſuch as had appeared on the mount of transfiguration, and in the tabernacle and temple of old, as the ſymbol of divine preſence. This viſion was highly proper to encourage Stephen, as the firſt martyr for the faith of Chriſt.

Here Jeſus is as particularly diſtinguiſhed from *God* as he is elſewhere from *angels*; and in the ſcriptures there

there is no mention made of any intelligent beings beſides *God, angels*, and *men*.

56. This could not fail to exaſperate the Jewiſh Sanhedrim before whom Stephen was ſpeaking, in a particular manner, as they were the very words which Jeſus himſelf pronounced before them when he was adjured by the high prieſt to tell them whether he was the Meſſiah or not; when he replied, *I am, and ye ſhall ſee the ſon of man ſitting on the right hand of power*, that is of God, *and coming in the clouds of heaven*.

59. It may be thought extraordinary that the Jews ſhould have no power of life and death, when Jeſus was condemned by them, and yet ſhould, without any application to the Roman governor, not only paſs ſentence of death upon Stephen, but actually execute it, and while the ſame governor Pilate was in the country. But Pilate was intereſted in conniving at many irregular proceedings of the Jews; having been guilty of many irregularities himſelf, and dreading a proſecution from them. Beſides, as this might not be at the time of any of the Jewiſh feſtivals, ſo that the governor would not be at Jeruſalem but at Cæſarea, the Jewiſh rulers might in his abſence take the greater liberty. That Stephen was put to death in a tumultuous manner, without the regular ſentence of a court, cannot be ſuppoſed. For as he is ſaid to have been brought before *the council by the people, the elders, and the Scribes*, and the *Highprieſt* himſelf preſided at the trial, this muſt have been the *Sanhedrim*, or the higheſt court of judicature among the Jews.

60 With

60. With what meekneſs did this firſt chriſtian martyr die, how much in the ſpirit of his maſter, praying for his enemies.

It is evident that the proper prayer of Stephen was addreſſed to God. As to his ſaying, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit*, or *laſt breath*, which was agreable to the cuſtoms of antiquity, when the receiving of the laſt breath was conſidered as the proper office of the perſon's neareſt friend, or relation, it muſt be conſidered that it was addreſſed to a perſon whom he actually ſaw in viſion, the ſtrong impreſſion of which muſt have been upon his mind; and a ſingle caſe of ſo extraordinary an occaſion as this, will by no means authorize us to addreſs our prayers to Chriſt. It is evident that the early chriſtians did not conſider this example as proper for their imitation. *I bow my knee*, ſays Paul, *to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, not to Chriſt himſelf. Our Saviour's own directions about prayer, expreſsly exclude himſelf from being the object of it. *Henceforth*, he ſays, *ye ſhall aſk me nothing, but whatever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, I will give it you.*

There was a peculiar propriety in Stephen's committing his *ſpirit*, or rather his *life*, to the care of Chriſt, as he is to come again to raiſe all the dead, and thus to give to all his faithful followers the lives which they had loſt in his ſervice, that from that time *where he is, there may they be alſo.* Stephen is not ſaid to have gone to Chriſt, whom he ſaw in viſion, immediately after his deceaſe, but, on the contrary, *he fell aſleep*, or went into a dormant inſenſible ſtate, in which he;

he, and all the dead, are to continue till the general refurrection. Till that glorious time, *our lives* are ſaid to be *hid with Chriſt in God*, but that *when Chriſt who is our life*, or has as it were the cuſtody of our lives, *ſhall appear*, *then*, but not before *ſhall we alſo appear with him in glory*. Let us, my chriſtian brethren, be continually looking forward to this bleſſed hope.

Ch. VIII. The Jewiſh rulers, encouraged by their ſucceſs in the death of Stephen, and exaſperated at the ſevere reproofs which he had given them, proceeded to a more open and general perſecution of the chriſtians, the Roman government ſeeming to take no part in the buſineſs. Pilate, if he was ſtill the governor, was intereſted not to offend the Jews, and the Romans in general might not be ſorry to ſee the Jews divided among themſelves, and wreaking their vengeance upon one another; as by this means they might think it would be eaſier to keep them all in ſubjection.

This firſt perſecution was probably ſome years after the aſcenſion of Jeſus. It ſeemed good to divine providence to ſpare the chriſtian church in its very infant ſtate. And this firſt perſecution was only from the Jews, it being many years from this time before the Romans took any umbrage at the riſing ſect, and by that time the chriſtian religion had taken ſo deep root as not to be injured by it. On the contrary, it received ſtrength, as it was more generally diffuſed by means of every perſecution, and eſpecially the more violent ones.

1. Saul, who was afterwards the apoſtle Paul, was now a young man. Till this time he had probably been

been purſuing his ſtudies, and might have been ſo ſituated as to have had but little opportunity of knowing Jeſus, or of being acquainted with his doctrine. However, the force of prejudice, even in well diſpoſed minds, is, in certain circumſtances, very great, ſo that it little becomes us to judge of the hearts of men by their conduct only. Paul had actually a *zeal for God*, tho' it was a zeal without knowledge, and our Saviour himſelf ſays to his diſciples that *in killing them men would think that they did God ſervice.* In general, however, it cannot be doubted but that perſecutors have been influenced by bad motives, their real views having been not to the glory of God, but their own temporal advantage, or the gratification of their revenge.

We ſee here how the diſciples of Jeſus obeyed the precepts of their maſter, in flying from the places where they were perſecuted, and how by this means the knowledge of the goſpel was farther diffuſed.

2. Notwithſtanding the public execution of Stephen as a criminal, his friends had the courage to ſhew their reſpect for him by a public funeral, in the uſual forms of the country.

5. The Samaritans held all the fundamental principles of the Jewiſh religion, and many of them were of Hebrew extraction. Several of them alſo were particularly prepared for the reception of the goſpel, by the preaching of Jeſus himſelf, whom they acknowledged to be the Meſſiah.

This Philip as well as Stephen, was one of the *ſeven* who had been choſen to relieve the apoſtles in buſineſs of

of a ſecular nature. They are commonly called *deacons*, but they appear alſo to have been aſſiſtants to the apoſtles in preaching the goſpel, and are therefore ſometimes called *evangelists*.

7. The cure of madneſs, which was imagined by the Jews to be occaſioned by the agency of evil ſpirits, and that of the palſy, which is alſo here mentioned, were both of them miracles of a very extraordinary nature, and they are always noticed as ſuch in all the goſpel hiſtory.

9. This Simon is generally called *Simon Magus*, and in the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory there are many traditions concerning him; ſome of them ſufficiently ridiculous and abſurd. He was probably one of thoſe who made profeſſion of the oriental philoſophy, and who were commonly called *magians*. Tho' moſt of theſe philoſophers were idolaters, worſhipping the ſun, and for that purpoſe making uſe of the emblem of *fire*, they were not all ſuch. For Daniel was made the chief of this order at Babylon, tho' he was a worſhipper of the true God. The magians made profeſſion of *ſcience* in general, but more eſpecially of aſtronomy and aſtrology. They alſo pretended to many ſecrets, of the nature of charms, by the power of which they were thought to do wonderful things, and many of them, like the Egyptian magicians, impoſed upon the credulity of the vulgar by artful tricks. Hence in time, came the modern uſe of the term *magic*.

10. i. e. He was ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed of ſome extraordinary power, not only ſuch as God alone could confer, but ſuch as was peculiar to thoſe beings who are thought

thought to derive their origin by an immediate emanation from the Supreme Being. Such beings as theſe were thought by the philoſophers of that age to be ſent occaſionally into this lower world, in the form of men. Such an one the chriſtian Gnoſtics conceived Chriſt to have been; and ſuch, it is probable, this Simon Magus, or his followers, pretended that he was.

13. Simon ſeems to have conſidered Philip as a man poſſeſſed of more extraordinary ſecrets than himſelf, and he attached himſelf to him, pretending to be a believer, perhaps with a view to obſerve him more narrowly, and thereby learn his arts.

17. It is evident from this, that the imparting of the gift of the holy ſpirit (the only conſequence of which probably was the being able to ſpeak in unknown tongues) was peculiar to the apoſtles. It pleaſed the Divine Being to diſtinguiſh this order of men in this particular manner, tho' we are not to ſuppoſe that this, or any other miraculous power, was exerted at the mere pleaſure of the apoſtles, but only when they had a divine impulſe for that purpoſe.

19. It was evidently the power of working miracles alone that impreſſed the mind of Simon ſo forcibly. He ſaw his own arts to be nothing in compariſon with the powers of which the apoſtle was poſſeſſed; and thinking that this power, like all that he pretended to, might be communicated to another, he wiſhed to make himſelf maſter of it; and as he was willing to impart his ſecrets to other perſons for what he ſhould think would be a valuable conſideration, he naturally imagined that Peter would do ſo too.

From this attempt of Simon to purchaſe a ſpiritual gift, the purchaſing of beneſices or church preferments, has obtained the name of *Simony*.

21. He had from the beginning formed a very wrong idea of the nature and object of chriſtianity, not conſidering that the reformation of heart and life, with a view to a happy immortality, was the diſtinguiſhing end of it. He conſidered it as a branch of *science*, which appeared to be ſuperior to his own, in what moſt of all drew his attention, viz. thoſe extraordinary things which it enabled chriſtians to do.

23. Here is an alluſion to a ſimilar expreſſion of Moſes, who ſpeaking of a tendency to idolatry, ſays *if a root of bitterness*, that is a noxious weed, ſpring up.

24. Simon was evidently overawed with the ſolemnity and the forcibleneſs of this ſevere rebuke, given by a perſon whoſe extraordinary power he ſo much admired. Whether he afterwards became a true penitent, and gave more attention to the proper nature of chriſtianity, does not appear from this hiſtory. According to the chriſtian writers, he continued not only an unbeliever, but an inveterate enemy to chriſtianity.

25. This Simon is generally conſidered by the early chriſtian writers as the founder of the *Gnostic heresy*, which was the earlieſt corruption of chriſtianity, and of which I ſhall take a proper opportunity to give ſome account. But it is more probable that without ever being a chriſtian, he was one of thoſe who diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the introduction of that ſpecies of philoſophy which has ſince obtained the name of *Oriental*, but which was in fact the only philoſophy of early times,

times, that of the Greeks themſelves being derived from it. According to it, all ſouls were emanations from the ſupreme mind, or parts detached from him, and often continued in an unembodied ſtate before they were ſent down into this world. Thoſe converts to chriſtianity, who had adopted the principles of this philoſophy, and were unwilling to abandon them, being offended at the idea of having nothing more than a crucified man for their maſter, held that the ſoul, or the intellectual part of Chriſt, had held a diſtinguiſhed rank in a prior ſtate, and that for the reformation of the world he was ſent down into it. To this celeſtial and ſuper-angelic ſpirit, they gave the name of Chriſt; ſuppoſing that he either aſſumed the form of a man without the ſubſtance, or merely inhabited the man Jeſus, without partaking of his ſufferings, which they conſidered as unworthy of a being of his rank.

This opinion had made a conſiderable progreſs among chriſtians, even in the time of the apoſtle Paul, and much more at the time that John wrote his epiſtles, in which he expreſſes the greateſt averſion to it. This was the beginning of the exaltation of the perſon of Chriſt; and tho' the principle, or ground of it, was afterwards changed by the Platonizing chriſtians, it proceeded to the proper *deification* and *worſhip*, of him, as God equal in power and glory to the Father. Of this firſt and moſt enormous corruption of chriſtianity we cannot be too fully apprized, nor can it be too ſtrenuouſly oppoſed. It will be in vain to preach chriſtianity to Jews or Mahometans, till it be underſtood that chriſtians hold the great doctrine of the unrivalled

premacy of *one God, the father*, and the perfect ſubjection of Chriſt, and all other beings, to him.

Philip the evangeliſt, one of the ſeven who were appointed extraordinary aſſiſtants to the apoſtles, having preached the goſpel with ſucceſs in Samaria, which was the occaſion of bringing thither Peter and John, that by the impoſition of their hands the holy ſpirit might be given to the new diſciples, is now ſent by God on another miſſion.

26. Gaza was a town in the ſouthern extremity of the land of Judea, and which, under the name of Gath, had formerly belonged to the Philiſtines. It is on the ſea coaſt towards Egypt, in a tract of land ſeparated from Judea by a ſandy deſert.

27. It was much the cuſtom of the Eaſtern courts to have the principal buſineſs of them done by eunuchs. *Candace* was for a long time a name common to all the queens of Ethiopia, as *Pharaoh* had been to all the kings of Egypt, and *Cæsar*, or *Auguſtus*, to the emperors of Rome.

Candace's kingdom was upon the Nile in Atbara. Her capital was taken in the time of Auguſtus. Her ſucceſſors exiſt there to this day. *Bruce's Travels*, p. 505.

This eunuch muſt have been a proſelyte to Judaiſm, and as ſuch have been circumciſed. He had probably been at Jeruſalem to attend one of the three great Jewiſh feſtivals. Cornelius was the firſt proſelyte of the uncircumciſion, and of him we have had no account as yet.

28 We

28. We ſee the piety and excellent diſpoſition of this eunuch, in ſo employing himſelf on his journey. He was probably in that ſandy deſart in which a carriage of any kind muſt have proceeded very ſlowly, and herefore have given more leiſure and convenience for reading.

32. All the more antient Jewiſh commentators allow this paſſage of the prophet Iſaiah to have been a prophecy concerning the Meſſiah. They alſo inferred from it, that the Meſſiah would have many difficulties to ſtruggle with, before he would arrive at the firm eſtabliſhment of his power.

33. Some interpret this as if, on account of the mean appearance of the Meſſiah, and his not being openly patronized by any perſon of conſequence, he was thought to be a more proper ſacrifice to the reſentment of the Jews. To a perſon ſo abject, juſtice, for reaſons of ſtate, was denied.

The phraſe, *Who ſhall declare his generation*, is by ſome interpreted to mean, who will take his part, by ſpeaking in his favour, in a court of juſtice; and Jeſus appears to have been alone, and unſupported, during his whole trial and condemnation. But other perſons think it more natural to conſider it as an exclamation againſt the wickedneſs of that generation.

37. How ſhort and ſimple was the faith of chriſtians in thoſe times. Happy would it have been for the church if no more articles of faith had been added to this creed.

38. It does not follow from this paſſage that Philip and the eunuch went *into the water*, ſo as to be covered

by it. In that deſart ſandy country, it is not very probable that any ſuch river or pool of water, could be found. But the words which we render going *into* the water, may be rendered going *to* it. So alſo coming *out* of the water might have been rendered coming, or returning, *from* it.

39. There is a remarkable various reading in this verſe, countenanced by ſome of the moſt ancient manuſcripts and quotations, viz. *The ſpirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch, and the angel of God caught away Philip.* As the holy ſpirit deſcended upon Cornelius and his friends without the impoſition of the hands of Peter, and no apoſtle was preſent here, it is not improbable but that this might have been the caſe with the eunuch as a certification to him of his being accepted as a diſciple of Chriſt, and to ſtrengthen his faith in his new profeſſion.

We have no inſtance of any other miracle ſimilar to this in all the goſpel hiſtory, viz. of a perſon being removed from one place to another in a miraculous manner; but ſuch an one occurs in the Old Teſtament with reſpect to Elijah.

40. He went along the ſea coaſt till he came to Ceſarea, where he probably ſettled; as many years after this, Paul found his daughters there.

Ch. IX. In a former chapter we had an account of Saul of Tarſus, a young man zealous for the obſervance of the law, and an active oppoſer of chriſtianity. He was probably a perſon of ſome rank and fortune. He was evidently in high eſtimation with the rulers of the Jews, and had the confidence of the high prieſts, and other

other chief magiſtrates, in conducting the perſecution againſt the chriſtians. It was at his feet that they who ſtoned Stephen laid their cloaths, having probably been appointed to ſee the ſentence of the court put in execution. We now ſee this very perſon, the moſt unlikely that could have been imagined to become a convert to chriſtianity, not only being converted, but becoming a moſt zealous and active promoter of it. No ſingle converſion could afford ſo fair an argument for the truth of the goſpel, becauſe nothing but the ſtrongeſt evidence, natural or ſupernatural, could have overcome ſuch incredulity. And we ſhall find the *circumſtances of the converſion* to be as remarkably in favour of the reality of it, as the conſideration of his previous character and ſituation.

1. So zealous was Saul in this buſineſs of perſecution that he needed no incitement. He himſelf, we ſee, ſought the employment. He went to the high-prieſt, and deſired of him authority to perſecute the chriſtians, not in Judea only, where the violence of the perſecution had probably led a great part to ſecrete themſelves, and from which it had driven others, but in the neighbouring countries, where the Jews acknowledged the authority of the Sanhedrim in matters relating to religion, no leſs than thoſe who reſided in Jeruſalem. In Damaſcus the Jews appear to have been very numerous, and in great credit, as may be ſeen in Joſephus the hiſtorian of thoſe times.

2. He carried them bound to Jeruſalem, becauſe he could have no authority to puniſh them in Damaſcus,

tho' by the connivance of the Roman governor, it might be done in Judea.

3. It is obſervable that this ſupernatural appearance was not in the night, when, by the help of a ſtrong imagination, a perſon may fancy almoſt any thing, but at *mid-day*, as Paul himſelf obſerves, and not when he was *alone*, but in company, and in company of men like himſelf, going on the ſame buſineſs, no doubt encouraging one another, and therefore void of all apprehenſion from the nature and conſequences of what they were about.

This light is elſewhere ſaid to *exceed the brightneſs of the ſun*, and indeed it muſt have been ſo if it was diſtinguiſhed at all; becauſe it was at mid day, when the ſun gives the greateſt light, but this extraordinary light muſt have overpowered it.

5. Here we ſee how much our Lord intereſts himſelf for his diſciples and followers. To perſecute them is to perſecute him, a ſentiment which we ſee more fully illuſtrated in his own account of the proceedings of the great day of judgment.

The word we render *pricks*, ſhould rather be *goads*, alluding to a ſtrong pointed rod with which thoſe who in the Eaſtern countries hold the plough, prick the oxen that draw it, againſt which if the oxen kick, they only hurt and wound themſelves. With an ox's goad of this kind, and which are ſtill uſed in the Eaſt, Shamgar fought and killed a great number of perſons, as we read in the book of Judges.

7. Saul does not appear to have ſeen any thing beſides the ſupernatural light, and all that his attendants heard

heard was the mere *sound of a voice*, but not the *articulate words*, which Saul only diſtinguiſhed. As it does not appear that Saul communicated this to his companions, they were probably witneſſes to the ſupernatural appearance only, without knowing the nature or the conſequences of it, and without being converted to chriſtianity, as Saul was. They were therefore the moſt unexceptionable witneſſes of the fact, and to them, with great propriety he afterwards appeals.

9. i. e. Till the third day.

14. *All, that call on thy name*, ſhould be rendered *all who call themſelves by thy name*, or who are thy diſciples. It was not then the practice of any chriſtians to call upon, invoke, or pray to Chriſt, but only to God in the name of Chriſt, or as chriſtians.

17. This would be a great confirmation of the reality of the appearance of Jeſus to himſelf, for Saul does not appear to have known any thing of this Ananias, who came to him of his own accord, after Saul had been apprized of his coming in a viſion.

As the holy ſpirit was not communicated by the laying on of any hands except thoſe of the apoſtles, this deſcent of the ſpirit upon Saul was of an extraordinary kind, ſimilar to that on the diſciples at the firſt, and on Cornelius and his friends afterwards. It is remarkable that Saul had no communication with any of the apoſtles, and received no inſtruction from them, but was afterwards made an apoſtle by Chriſt himſelf, who by appearing to him and converſing with him gave him the moſt ſatisfactory evidence of his reſurrection from the dead, to be a witneſs to which was the chief qualification

tion of an apoſtle. For after enumerating ſeveral appearances of Jeſus after his reſurrection, Paul ſays in his epiſtle to the Corinthians, and *laſt of all he appeared to me as to one born out of due time*, and he repeatedly ſays, that he received his goſpel not from *men* but from *Chriſt himſelf*.

20. This preaching of Paul was probably before he had received any particular inſtructions from Chriſt in perſon, and therefore before he was properly an *apoſtle*.

21. We have had an account of the wonderful converſion of Saul of Tarſus, who from being a violent perſecutor, became a zealous preacher of chriſtianity, and it was a converſion, as I have obſerved, ſo circumcumſtanced, as to afford the ſtrongeſt evidence of the truth of chriſtianity; for nothing but the fulleſt conviction of this could have induced ſuch a perſon as Saul was to change his purſuits, and his conduct, as he evidently did. This was effected by the miraculous appearance of Jeſus himſelf at mid-day, as he was near Damaſcus, whither he was going to apprehend the chriſtians in that city, that he might carry them bound to Jeruſalem, the unbelieving Jews in that place concurring with him in thoſe meaſures.

Upon his converſion, his being baptized by Ananias, and receiving the holy ſpirit, Paul immediately began to preach to the unbelieving Jews in Damaſcus; proving to them that Jeſus, whom he had lately perſecuted, was the Chriſt, or the Meſſiah.

23. It is pretty evident from the whole hiſtory of Paul, and eſpecially from the account which he gives of

of himſelf in his epiſtle to the Galatians, that he did not continue long at Damaſcus after his converſion, but went into the neighbouring country, which was part of Arabia, of which, as well as of Damaſcus itſelf, Aretas was at that time king; and that he preached the goſpel there, that is, to the Jews reſiding there, three years. As Paul did this without having had any communication with the apoſtles, none of whom he had then ſo much as ſeen; and as the goſpel does not appear to have been preached there before, it is probable that he had then received his inſtructions to preach as *an apoſtle*, from Chriſt himſelf in perſon, from whom he clearly intimates that he derived all his knowledge of the goſpel. After this three years excurſion, he returned again to Damaſcus, and then it was that he was driven out of the place by the perſecution of the Jews, as we ſhall preſently find.

24. In 2. Cor. xi, 32. Paul ſays, in Damaſcus, the governor, under Aretas the king, kept the city of the Damaſcenes with a garriſon, deſirous to apprehend me. This was probably done by the intereſt of the Jews with the governor. For at this time the king cannot be ſuppoſed to have favoured them. It was the daughter of this king Aretas that Herod of Galilee had divorced when he took his brother Philip's wife; and on this account there had been a war between the two princes, in which Herod had been defeated.

27. Barnabas had probably had ſome opportunity (of which, however, we have no account) of knowing more concerning Paul than other chriſtians did. Some ſay that they had been brought up together under Gamaliel,

malicl. Cyprus, the country of Barnabas, was oppoſite to Tarſus, of which Paul was a native, and their acquaintance might have commenced in early life.

29. Theſe *Grecians* muſt have been Jews uſing the Greek tongue, or elſe proſelytes; for at that time the goſpel had not been preached to the uncircumciſed Gentiles.

31. This *reſt from perſecution* was probably owing to the great apprehenſion the Jews were under from the reſentment of the emperor Caligula, who had inſiſted upon being worſhipped as a god through all the Roman empire; an order which no nation but the Jews made any difficulty of complying with. For as many of them worſhipped *dead men*, and living *animals*, and all of them ſome *natural object* or other, to which they ſuppoſed extraordinary powers were annexed, the idea of worſhipping *a living man*, eſpecially an emperor, a being of ſo great power, and to whoſe exaltation they might think their immortal gods had contributed, would not appear difficult. But the Jews, who were rigorouſly and juſtly attached to the worſhip of *the one living and true God*, the maker of heaven and earth, and who thought it their indiſpenſable duty to abide by the profeſſion of their religion at all events, could not be brought to comply with this impious order. Provoked by their oppoſition, he ſent an expreſs order to have his ſtatue ſet up in the holy place in the temple at Jeruſalem. The conſternation into which the whole country was thrown on this occaſion, which was ſo great as to make them wholly neglect their agriculture, and ſecular buſineſs, moved the Roman governor to compaſſion.

compaſſion. He therefore deferred the execution of his order, and preſently after, this ſelf created deity, but in fact one of the greateſt brutes and tyrants that ever lived, was put to death.

This *reſt of the Chriſtian Church*, was therefore probably about ten years after the death of Chriſt.

34. Theſe circumſtances of the riſing and taking, or taking away, his bed, are ſimilar to thoſe which attended on our Saviour's miracles.

36. *Dorcas* in Greek ſignifies the ſame with *Tabitha* in *Hebrew*, viz. quick ſighted.

40. Peter, no doubt, on both theſe occaſions perceived himſelf to be moved by ſome extraordinary impulſe to perform theſe miracles; and this was the *prayer of faith*, to which he was thus prompted, and to which our Lord promiſed a certain and favourable anſwer from God. It is evident that none of the apoſtles had the power of working miracles at their pleaſure, and we may infer, as I have ſhewn from the hiſtory of the reſurrection of Lazarus, that our Saviour himſelf always applied to God his Father, from whom he derived his being, and all his powers, for his aſſiſtance in all his miraculous works; and concerning all ſuch works, he expreſsly ſays, that they were *not his own*, but that they were done by *his father who was in him*, and acted by him.

Ch. X. We are now come to a new and capital æra in the goſpel hiſtory, viz. that of the preaching of it to the *uncircumcised Gentiles*, about ten years after the death of Chriſt, in which time it had been preached to the Jews only, or to proſelytes from heatheniſm. There were

were many clear intimations in the ancient prophecies, that the reign of the Meſſiah, and the bleſſings of his kingdom, whatever they were, ſhould be extended to *all nations*, and our Lord himſelf had not only in his parables, but in a mere direct manner, aſſerted the ſame thing, and in his laſt commiſſion to the apoſtles he moſt expreſly commmanded them *to preach the goſpel to every creature*. But, prejudiced as they were in favour of the privileges of the Jewiſh nation, as the *peculiar people of God*, they might naturally enough underſtand every thing of this kind as intended for the Jews who were diſperſed in all nations; or, as what was to follow upon the proſelyting of all nations to the Jewiſh religion, in conſequence of which they were to become circumciſed and conform to all the burdenſome rites of the law of Moſes.

Conſidering this deep rooted prejudice of the whole Jewiſh nation, chriſtians as well as others, there was great wiſdom in the appointment that the goſpel ſhould be preached a ſufficient time to the Jews only; that their prejudices might not be too much ſhocked, and that they might have one pretence the leſs for rejecting it. But now, that the harveſt as we may ſay of the Jews was in a great meaſure over, and the whole nation had had a ſufficient trial, it pleaſed God that his original intention with reſpect to all his creatures of mankind, ſhould be accompliſhed, and the Goſpel be preached to them all.

But freſh miracles were requiſite to prepare the minds of the apoſtles themſelves for a thing ſo unexpected by them.

1. The Roman armies were divided into cohorts, or bands conſiſting of about a thouſand men each, commanded by a tribune, and theſe again into companies, of an hundred men commanded by a centurion. This band, or cohort, was probably that which was ſtationed at Ceſarea for the guard of the governor's perſon who reſided there. This Ceſarea was a town rebuilt, and ſo called, by Herod the great, in honour of Cæſar, or the Roman emperor.

2. Several Gentiles, eſpecially thoſe reſiding in Judea, having better opportunity of diſtinguiſhing the religion of the Jews from that of other nations, had their minds greatly impreſſed in favour of it, and tho' they did not chuſe to be circumciſed, and thereby become proſelytes to the Jewiſh religion, yet became worſhippers of the God of Iſrael, the only living and true God, and by means of this firſt great principle of true religion, and meditating upon the books of ſcripture, they became excellent characters. It was an eaſy and happy tranſition that one of this character ſhould be fixed upon to be the firſt to whom the goſpel ſhould be preached. It would leſs ſhock the minds of the Jewiſh chriſtians. The character of this Cornelius was ſimilar to that of the centurion whoſe ſervant Jeſus' healed at a diſtance from his houſe, who is ſaid to have loved the Jewiſh nation, and to have built them a ſynagogue.

We ſee here that Cornelius was not only a worſhipper of the true God himſelf, but alſo brought up his family in that worſhip, as it becomes every pious and virtuous perſon to do.

By

By his *prayers to God always*, we may underſtand at all the hours and ſeaſons at which it was cuſtomary with the pious Jews to pray, viz. both at the time of morning and evening ſacrifice, and alſo at noon.

3. i. e. About our three o'clock in the afternoon.

4. This was not a ſpeech addreſſed to the angel, but a prayer to God, whoſe meſſenger he concluded the angel to be. For ſuch appearances he muſt have known had not been uncommon.

It pleaſed God not to enlighten the mind of this Cornelius by his own immediate agency, or by this angel, or by the appearance of Chriſt to him, but by means of common inſtructors. And in no caſe are we to look for extraordinary information, when the common and ordinary means are ſufficient.

7. We ſee that not only the immediate houſehold of this Cornelius, but other perſons alſo who attended upon him, were worſhippers of the true God. In ſuch he would naturally repoſe the moſt confidence; and ſuch he would employ in matters of truſt.

9. Joppa was diſtant from Ceſarea about thirty miles, and we find theſe meſſengers arrived there the ſecond day at noon, having probably ſet out the evening before.

The houſes of the Jews, I have frequently obſerved had flat roofs, and this part of the houſe was often as uſeful as any other. It was frequently uſed for the purpoſe of devotion as a perſon would be leaſt expoſed to obſervation there, and thence he could better direct his views to the temple at Jeruſalem to which all pious Jews looked when they prayed.

10. i. e. He

10. i. e. He became inſenſible to all preſent objects as if he had been in a deep ſleep, and was wholly intent on what was paſſing in his own mind.

12. i. e. Both clean and unclean.

14. As Peter uſes the word *Lord* in his addreſs to the perſon who ſpake to him, it is probable that he knew it to be Jeſus, who appeared to him, as he did more than once to Paul; and it is remarkable that, upon ſeveral occaſions, we find our Lord himſelf acting in perſon in what reſpected the progreſs of his goſpel. In what manner he is employed now, that miraculous powers have ceaſed, we are not informed; and it is, no doubt, very proper that we ſhould remain ignorant of it.

15. i. e. Has declared to be clean, and was therefore now proper to be killed and eaten. It was by the diſtinction of meats into clean and unclean, and confining the Jews to the uſe of the former, that they were more eſpecially ſeparated from the reſt of the world; and therefore a viſion of this kind, in which the diſtinction of meats was repreſented as aboliſhed, was peculiarly well calculated to prepare the mind of Peter to receive the farther intimation, that the diſtinction between the Jews and Gentiles was aboliſhed, that is, ſo far that the goſpel was to be preached to both without diſtinction, and that, in believing and obeying it, both would be equally accepted of God, and intitled to the happineſs of heaven. But that the Jews, tho' converted to chriſtianity, are to remain a diſtinct people to the end of the world, is moſt fully intimated in the ſcriptures; and it is highly probable that they will always remain

a peculiar people, diſtinguiſhed by a peculiar mode of worſhip. At leaſt many things in the prophecy of Ezekiel, evidently relate to times poſterior to their final reſtoration to their own country.

20. i. e. He made no diſtinction with reſpect to the perſons who were ſent. For a rigid Jew would not have gone with any Gentiles, ſo as to converſe familiarly with them, and be entertained by them.

23. This being a matter of conſequence, it was very prudent in Peter to provide proper witneſſes of the whole tranſaction, for his juſtification to his Jewiſh brethren, of which we ſhall find he ſtood in need.

We are now as I obſerved before conſidering a new æra of the preaching of the goſpel, viz. to the uncircumciſed Gentiles introduced by the miniſtry of the apoſtle Peter, as was that of the firſt preaching of it to the Jews, after the deſcent of the *holy ſpirit* on the day of pentecoſt. And thus perhaps, was fulfilled whatever there was of pre-eminence given to Peter, when our Lord ſaid to him that he would *give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and upon him, as a rock, he would build his church*, tho' in a ſufficient proper ſenſe, this was true of all the apoſtles; and ſimilar expreſſions are uſed with reſpect to them all.

We have ſeen that, on account of this event being unexpected even by the apoſtles, peculiar miracles were employed to prepare the way for it, viz. a ſupernatural viſion to Cornelius, to whom the goſpel was firſt preached, and another to Peter, and tho', in conſequence of this, he could not forbear to go on this errand, yet he had the precaution to take with him ſeveral of the Jewiſh

iſh converts, to be witneſſes of all that ſhould paſs, and to juſtify him to his brethren afterwards.

24. Probably devout perſons like himſelf, that they might have the benefit of Peter's communications, whatever they might be.

25. i. e. He ſhewed him marks of the greateſt reverence and reſpect that were uſually paid by one man to another in that country.

26. Peter could not but know that Cornelius conſidered him as no other than a man, tho' highly diſtinguiſhed by God; but he admoniſhed him that no man is intitled to ſuch extreme reverence from another man. It would have been happy for mankind if they had conſidered themſelves as more nearly equal to one another, and if pride and arrogance on the one hand, and ſervility on the other, had not been carried to ſo great extremes. There has been much impiety in the titles given to kings and great men.

28. This being known to be an eſtabliſhed cuſtom with the Jews, it was proper for Peter to give ſome reaſon for his ready departure from it; and this was no leſs than a poſitive order from God, who had originally made the diſtinction between the Jews and the Gentiles.

29. Peter had been informed by the meſſengers of the reaſon of his being ſent for; but for the ſake of ſo great a company, it was proper that Cornelius ſhould declare this himſelf before them all.

30. i. e. In the fourth day from this time: The meſſengers ſet out the evening before they arrived at Joppa the ſecond day, the third was perhaps wholly em-

ployed in the journey, the fourth day, at the ninth hour, or our three o'clock in the afternoon, was this interview. The diſtance between Joppa and Ceſarea was between forty and fifty miles, and therefore too much for one day's journey in that hot climate.

35. i. e. He does not confine his favours to the Jews, or thoſe who conform in all things to the law of Moſes, but reſpects perſons of every nation, on account of thoſe good works, for the ſake of which he originally diſtinguiſhed Abraham himſelf.

36. That goſpel of peace which was preached by Jeſus Chriſt is not confined to the Jews; the kingdom of Chriſt, and the bleſſings of it, extending to all mankind.

37. As the goſpel had now been preached ten years, and in the very city of Ceſarea, where Cornelius reſided, by Philip, the nature of it could not be unknown to any perſon then preſent; the miracles of Chriſt and of the apoſtles having been of the moſt public nature. But the Gentiles had conſidered it as a thing that did not concern them.

38. You ſee here how all the extraordinary power of Chriſt is aſcribed to God, who was with him, and acted by him.

41. The proper office of an apoſtle was to bear witneſs of the reſurrection of Chriſt, of which, as they had known him the moſt intimately before his death, they were the moſt competent judges. We ſee here, as upon other occaſions, what ſtreſs was laid upon Chriſt's *eating* with the apoſtles after his reſurrection, as a proof it was no *apparition*, but a real human *body*, having all the natural functions of other human bodies.

I

I have endeavoured to shew that, had Christ appeared publicly to all the people of the Jews, and they had been converted by it, the gospel history would not have been so credible at this distance of time as it now is. The opposition made to the gospel by the Jews and the Romans of that age was necessary to its appearing not to be the work of man, or any thing to which human contrivance or power had contributed; and nothing but the most indisputable evidence could have made its way through such opposition.

42. We see here the great object of the gospel, which is the discovery of a life or state of retribution to come, or the announcing to us this great event, that Christ is to come again, to raise the dead and judge the world, when he will give to every man according to his works. Now in this all who call themselves christians agree, notwithstanding their violent opposition to one another, on account of lesser things. To this great object, therefore, which is common to all christians, let us give the greatest attention, and consider all other articles as of less consequence, and only subservient to this.

43. Whenever the remission of sin is mentioned as the consequence of believing in Christ, it is to be understood of such a faith in Christ, or belief of christianity, as is followed by its proper effects, viz. repentance and good works.

44. This descent of the holy spirit upon the first fruits of the uncircumcision was similar to that on the Jewish converts on the day of Pentecost; being an immediate operation of God, and not in the usual way of conferring the gifts of the spirit, viz. by laying on of the hands of the apostles. This was the most satisfac-

tory proof of the whole work being of God; and with this view the hiſtory is recited by Peter, in his juſtification of himſelf to his brethren at Jeruſalem.

This deſcent of the ſpirit on the Gentiles, notwithſtanding all the preceding extraordinary circumſtances, we ſee greatly aſtoniſhed the Jewiſh converts who accompanied Peter. They probably expected that circumciſion, and every thing attending a proſelytiſm to the Jewiſh religion, ſhould have preceded this divine token of the title of theſe Gentiles to the benefits of chriſtianity. And notwithſtanding this miraculous appearance, we find that the Jewiſh converts were with great difficulty reconciled to this diſpenſation of the goſpel.

47. It is evident from this part of the hiſtory, that *baptism by the spirit*, is not all that is meant by *baptism* in the New Teſtament. For here, tho' the deſcent of the ſpirit, or ſpiritual baptiſm, had preceded, yet the apoſtle Peter only alleges this as a reaſon for baptizing with water afterwards.

48. We have here another inſtance of baptizing in the name of Jeſus only; and not in the form of words which ſome ſuppoſed to be preſcribed by our Lord, *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, which particular words, as I have obſerved before, had better be avoided in the adminiſtration of this rite, and other words, if any be thought neceſſary, expreſſive of the ſame meaning, be employed, if, for no other reaſon, not to encourage ſuperſtition; ſince many, no doubt, imagine, that ſome peculiar virtue, or charm, accompanies theſe words when pronounced by a perſon duly

duly qualified. On this account they have been annexed to all the popiſh *ſacraments*, and to exorciſms of all kinds.

Ch. XI. We are now come to the opening of a great controverſy, with which the minds of chriſtians were much agitated in the whole of the apoſtolic age, viz. about the admiſſion of the uncircumciſed Gentiles into the chriſtian church, and to which a very great part of the epiſtles of Paul refer. Every precaution ſeems to have been taken by divine wiſdom to make this meaſure, to which the natural prejudices of the Jews made them ſo extremely averſe, as eaſy to them as poſſible, and eſpecially to make the part which the apoſtle Peter had to act in it, the moſt unexceptionable. He had been directed by a ſupernatural viſion to do every thing that he did in this affair, and upon his preaching to Cornelius (who on account of his excellent character, was as proper a perſon as could have been choſen for the firſt fruits of the Gentile church) the holy ſpirit had deſcended upon him and his believing friends, without any interference of Peter in the buſineſs; ſo that, as he obſerved, it was impoſſible to refuſe to baptize with water, as a token of their being chriſtian converts, thoſe whom God had previouſly honoured with that ſeal of his approbation which had uſually followed baptiſm. Let us however ſee in what manner the news of this tranſaction was received at Jeruſalem.

2. Tho' the uſual place of Peter's abode was Joppa, yet on this great event he had probably gone of his own accord to Jeruſalem, to give the moſt ſatisfactory account of the whole buſineſs.

It is plain from the whole hiſtory that neither Peter in particular, nor the apoſtles in general, were conſidered as infallible by the body of chriſtians in thoſe days. Otherwiſe they would not have thought of arraigning his conduct, as we find they did.

3. They do not immediately accuſe Peter of baptizing Cornelius and his friends, but only of familiarly converſing and eating with them, contrary to the received cuſtoms of ſtrict Jews. But it does not by any means appear that, though in company with Gentiles, Peter eat of any thing that was forbidden to a Jew, ſo as to tranſgreſs the law of Moſes. Had he done any thing of this kind, it could not fail to have been noticed, and to have excited the greateſt alarm.

6. None of theſe beaſts were ſuch as a Jew would deem clean or proper for food; for otherwiſe he might have ſelected that, and omitted the reſt.

12. i. e. Making no diſtinction of perſons, circumciſed or uncircumciſed.

15. i. e. Without any deſire or interference of mine.

18. He preached that goſpel which promiſes the forgiveneſs of ſins upon repentance, the Jews believing that all the bleſſings of a future life, if not the privilege of a reſurrection, were reſerved for the Jews only.

19. This was the country north of Judea. Antioch was the metropolis of Syria, and next to Rome and Alexandria was the moſt conſiderable city at that time in the Roman empire, and like other great cities, it abounded with Jews.

20. i. e. Uncircumciſed Greeks, or Gentiles.

22 Bar-

22. Barnabas being a native of Cyprus, which was not far from Antioch, and being probably a perſon of conſiderable property, was known to many perſons there, and reſpected by them, and therefore was the more proper to be ſent thither.

25. After Paul had preached the goſpel in Arabia and Damaſcus, and had been a ſhort time at Jeruſalem, he informs us (Gal. iii, 21.) that he went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and he had probably reſided chiefly at Tarſus, the place of his nativity, preaching the goſpel there.

26. Barnabas, knowing the zeal and ability of Paul, wiſhed to have ſuch an aſſociate.

We are not told whether the term *chriſtian* was given to the diſciples of Chriſt by other perſons, or aſſumed by themſelves, but the former is the more probable of the two, both from the nature of the thing, and the form of the expreſſion that is here uſed. Before this time the chriſtian converts had generally been called *Nazarenes*, and by this appellation the Jewiſh converts were always diſtinguiſhed. But this was a term that could not with ſo much propriety be applied to Gentiles; and on this account, perhaps, their heathen neighbours adopted the more comprehenſive term of chriſtian, and it might eaſily occur to them, as proper to diſtinguiſh the diſciples of Chriſt, as the diſciples of heathen philoſophers, ſuch as Plato and Ariſtotle, had always been diſtinguiſhed in a ſimilar manner, that is from the name of the founder of the ſect, the former having been called Platoniſts, and the latter Ariſtotelians.

It

It would perhaps have been happy if all chriſtians had contented themſelves with this ſimple appellation, expreſſive of their diſcipleſhip to Chriſt. But as they ſubdivided in their opinions, other names became neceſſary to diſtinguiſh them from one another; nor is there much inconvenience in this, provided we remember that all other denominations, ſuch as thoſe of Lutherans, Calviniſts, Socinians, &c. are only ſubdiviſions of chriſtians, and that we do not deny to each other their right to that general and comprehenſive appellation.

28. There were ſeveral deaths or famines in the reign of Claudius. This was probably the ſecond year of his reign, or the fortieth of the chriſtian æra when Joſephus informs us that the queen of Adiabene and her ſon Izates, converts to the Jewiſh religion, ſent large ſupplies of corn to Jeruſalem from *Egypt* and *Cyprus*, which ſhews that this famine was not univerſal. So by this means the chriſtian church at Antioch and its neighbourhood had a fine opportunity of relieving the wants of their brethren at Jeruſalem, and this *labour of love* would tend greatly to reconcile the minds of the Jewiſh converts to their new brethren of the uncircumciſion. It appears alſo to have been cuſtomary with the richer Jews in the provinces to ſend contributions to the poorer Jews in Judea.

Ch. XII. We are now come to the end of that period of reſt from the perſecution of the Jews during the reign of the emperor Caligula, a monſter of cruelty and extravagance, who had taken into his head to be worſhipped as a God in his lifetime, and who had prepared

pared a golden ſtatue of himſelf which he was reſolved to have placed in the temple of Jeruſalem. After his death A. D. 41, the Jews being no longer apprehenſive on their own account, reſumed their perſecution of the chriſtians.

1. This Herod is uſually called Herod Agrippa. He was the grandſon of Herod the Great by Ariſtobulus, and being educated at Rome, he had acquired an extravagant turn, in conſequence of which he was ſo reduced, that he was in a great meaſure dependant on his uncle Herod of Galilee, and Herodias his wife, who was his own ſiſter, tho' it was thought they did not aſſiſt him ſo liberally as they ought to have done. On the death of his uncle Philip, the emperor Caligula, to whom he had been much attached, gave him his dominions, with the title of *king*, ſo that he now ranked above his uncle, on whom he had been dependent. This circumſtance exciting the envy of his ſiſter Herodias, ſhe perſuaded her huſband to go to Rome, to ſolicit the ſame title, and alſo an augmentation of his territories. But Agrippa ſent at the ſame time to accuſe him of deſigns againſt the empire, and being believed, both Herod and his wife were baniſhed into Gaul, where they ended their days; and this Agrippa obtained the grant of all his dominions. Such was the end of that Herod who put John the Baptiſt to death. Still however Agrippa had nothing to do with *Judea* properly ſo called. But on the acceſſion of Claudius, which being then at Rome, he had greatly promoted, he was inveſted with the kingdoms of Judea and Samaria, ſo that he had now the

ſame

ſame extent of territory with his grandfather Herod the great, and in the ſecond year of Claudius A. D. 43, he arrived in his dominions, and being willing to oblige his new ſubjects, he proceeded againſt the apoſtles in the manner that we ſhall now find.

2. This is that James who, together with his brother John, the ſons of Zebedee, and Peter, had been particularly diſtinguiſhed by Jeſus. Theſe two brothers had preſumed ſo much on the favour of their maſter, that by means of their mother they had petitioned for the chief places in his kingdom. In reply he had aſked them whether they were able to drink the cup which he ſhould drink of, that is go through the ſame difficult ſcenes that lay before him; and when that they replied that they could, he ſaid that they ſhould indeed drink of his cup, but that the advancement for which they petitioned was not at his diſpoſal, but at that of his heavenly Father. We now find one of them drinking of his cup, by dying a violent death, the firſt of all the apoſtles, fourteen years after the death of Jeſus.

4. He had ſixteen guards appointed him, two of whom were always chained to him, one to each hand, while two others kept the door. Each of the ſets of four did this duty in their turns. Being ſo many, there was no probability of bribing them.

10. This *iron gate*, was probably a gate plated with iron, as is ſtill very common in priſons.

This deliverance was more remarkable in its circumſtances than that of the ſame apoſtle and John preſently after the effuſion of the ſpirit on the day of pentecoſt. Like that, this muſt have made a great impreſſion on thoſe

thoſe who were acquainted with it. But by this time the minds of the Jews in general were become callous to the moſt ſatisfactory evidence.

12. This Mark was probably the evangeliſt, the particular companion of Peter, and who is ſaid to have written his goſpel by his inſtructions.

13. They were unwilling to admit ſtrangers, and were obliged to aſſemble with great privacy for fear of their enemies.

15. Perhaps they might think it to be a meſſenger from him, for ſo it might be rendered, ſuppoſing that ſhe could not diſtinguiſh whether the name was pronounced by himſelf or another. Or they might think an angel was ſent to them on his account, and therefore might be called his angel. That each perſon had a particular guardian angel, is not known to have been the opinion of the Jews.

17. This was perhaps leſt their noiſy exultation ſhould alarm their enemies, and bring them into freſh danger. Tho' he had been twice delivered by miracles, he was not to tempt providence by raſhly expoſing himſelf.

18. Perhaps the ſoldiers who had the cuſtody might have been aſleep, and not have perceived that he was gone till the morning.

19. He took it for granted that it muſt have been by their connivance.

20. Galilee was remarkably fruitful in corn, and Tyre and Sidon, being maritime cities, depended upon it for a ſupply of proviſions.

This

21. This was in honour, as Joſephus ſays, of Cæſar's birth day.

22. Joſephus gives the ſame account of this ſpeech, adding that Herod was cloathed in a garment on which was much gold, and that the ſun ſhining upon him, he made a very reſplendent appearance.

23. Joſephus ſays that he was ſeized with a diſorder of his bowels, in which probably the worms firſt bred. It is remarkable that his grandfather died of the ſame tormenting and loathſome diſeaſe, as alſo ſome other perſons who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves the moſt by their perſecution of the chriſtians. It is not, however, in this life that we are to expect proper retribution, and therefore we ſhould be exceedingly cautious how we infer any thing concerning the characters of men, and the judgments of God concerning them, *from any thing* that befals them in this world; tho' every thing in it be ordered by the wiſe providence of God, and therefore we are to conſider the hand of God in all events.

24. Perhaps the deliverance of Peter, and the death of Herod, had been a means of putting a ſtop to this perſecution, which does not ſeem to have been of great extent or continuance. Herod died probably in the ſecond year of his reign, and the firſt after his arrival in his dominions. He left a ſon of the name of Agrippa, then ſeventeen years old, before whom Paul pleaded, and who was by him almoſt perſuaded to be a chriſtian; but for the preſent his dominions were reduced to a Roman province. He alſo left two daughters, both mentioned in this book of Acts; one Berenice, married

ed to Herod king of Chalcis, his own brother, and Druſilla, afterwards married to the Roman governor Felix.

25. They had been to carry alms from the chriſtians in the neighbourhood of Antioch, in conſequence of the famine which had been foretold by Agabus.

CH. XIII. From this time the author of this book the acts of the apoſtles, confines himſelf to the labours of the apoſtle Paul, whoſe companion he frequently was; and we ſhall now have an account of his firſt remarkable journey for the purpoſe of preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles, which was probably A. D. 44 or 45. We cannot doubt but before this time he muſt have been fully inſtructed by Jeſus himſelf for this important work, and as he informs us 2. Cor. xii, 1. he had a remarkable viſion as he was praying in the temple, fourteen years before that epiſtle was written viz. about A. D. 58, which coincides pretty nearly with the time of his being ſent from Jeruſalem to Antioch, or this year A. D. 44. It is poſſible that ſome part of thoſe ſupernatural communications were made to him at that time. But to have been fully inſtructed in the goſpel, o rder to his receiving his commiſſion as *an apoſtle*, more time, and a more convenient place, were evidently requiſite and theſe inſtructions were probably given him ſoon after his converſion. Before this time he had received the right hand of fellowſhip from the apoſtles at Jeruſalem, as he informs us Gal. ii, 9, and at that time it was agreed among them, according to his inſtructions from Chriſt, that he and Barnabas ſhould go to the Gentiles, while they would in a great meaſure

confine

confine themſelves to the Jews, or proſelytes; and we ſhall ſee in the courſe of this hiſtory how able and intrepid a preacher he was.

Whether Barnabas was properly *an apoſtle* or not, has been doubted. He is once called ſo, and his being joined in this commiſſion with Paul, and his being attended as he was by an inferior miniſter, gives ſome countenance to the ſuppoſition. But the term *apoſtle* is ſometimes uſed in a more reſtrained ſenſe, as a perſon bearing any particular commiſſion, ſuch as Barnabas, had done from the chriſtian church and the apoſtles at Jeruſalem.

On this expedition Paul and Barnabas were attended by John, who was ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas, the ſame probably with the evangeliſt Mark, who was afterwards more particularly attached to Peter, and who *is* thought to have received his inſtructions from *him* in writing his goſpel.

We ſee among theſe prophets a teacher of chriſtianity, one who had been brought up with Herod of Galilee, ſo that tho' not many perſons of diſtinction embraced chriſtianity in thoſe early times, *ſome* did, which ſhews that the greateſt temptations in this world, powerful as their influence is on the minds of men, will nevertheleſs give way to the force of conviction in candid and upright minds. In general the converts to chriſtianity in the early ages conſiſted of perſons who were neither of the higheſt nor the loweſt ranks of life, but as Origen informs us, of thoſe of the middle ranks, where we generally find both the beſt diſpoſitions, and the

the moſt leiſure for enquiry. We frequently indeed, find mention of *ſlaves* who were chriſtians. But many ſlaves in thoſe times were perſons of education, and were entruſted with the management of their maſter's affairs; and very deſervedly poſſeſſed their confidence. In thoſe times it was the lot of many worthy and able perſons to be reduced to ſlavery, and it was not always a diſagreable ſituation. In many reſpects alſo, they acted, as well as thought, for themſelves.

2. In what manner this information from God was given, does not appear. It was probably by ſome of thoſe who are here called *prophets*; but from the form of the expreſſion it does not appear to have been given to Paul or Barnabas themſelves, tho' as we have ſeen, they had a general previous knowledge of their deſtination.

3. By the *laying on of the hands* it is evident that no particular powers were communicated to theſe apoſtles. They were fully qualified for their work before. It was only the cuſtomary form in which perſons were recommended to the bleſſing of God by prayer. Thus we find Jacob put his hands upon the heads of the two ſons of Joſeph, when he prayed for them on his death bed.

4. Selucia was a city ſituated on the ſame river with Antioch, at the diſtance of twelve miles from it, and nearer to the ſea. The iſland of Cyprus is directly oppoſite to that part of the coaſt; and being the native country of Barnabas, it was perhaps on this account firſt viſited by them in this progreſs. Beſides, this iſland abounded with Jews.

5. Salamis is a city in Cyprus directly oppoſite to the place from which they had ſailed.

Tho' their commiſſion was to preach the goſpel indiſcriminately to all perſons, they prudently began in the Jewiſh ſynagogues, and probably never preached any where elſe in public, till they were refuſed admittance into thoſe places.

6. This Barjeſus, or Elymas, as he is afterwards called, was probably a perſon of the ſame profeſſion and character with Simon Magus. For the word that is here render *Sorcerer*, means only one of the *Magians*, or perſons who applied to the ſtudy of wiſdom or philoſophy, ſuch as thoſe *wise men* who are ſaid to have viſited Chriſt in his infancy. Many of theſe, being Jews, were ſtrongly infected with the general prejudices of their nation againſt the chriſtian name. This Elymas being a man of ſcience in thoſe days, it is no wonder that we find him with the proconſul, or the chief Roman governor in the iſland, and that he ſhould endeavour to prepoſſeſs him againſt chriſtianity. The governor being however a candid and upright man, deſirous of all kinds of knowledge, he was willing to hear Paul and Barnabas himſelf; having probably heard of their preaching in the country. For Paphos, where the governor reſided, is in a part of the iſland directly oppoſite to Salamis, where they had landed; and they had probably proceeded leiſurely through the whole extent of the iſland in their way to Paphos, and made many converts.

9. Paul no doubt found himſelf ſupernaturally directed to ſpeak in this manner, as Peter was in the caſe of

of Ananias and Sapphira. His example therefore, will by no means authorize any perſon to adopt ſimilar language at this day, ſo as to denounce the judgments of God upon thoſe whom they apprehend to oppoſe the truth. Let them firſt give the ſame evidence of their ſpeaking by divine impulſe, that is, the evidence of miracles.

12. So remarkable a miracle, wrought in his own preſence, by which a violent oppoſer of the goſpel was ſo effectually checked and confounded, could not but make a great impreſſion on the mind of a perſon even worſe diſpoſed than that of this Roman governor. What effect this converſion of the governor had on the inhabitants of the iſland we are not told, but, no doubt, it muſt have been great.

You will pleaſe to obſerve that upon this occaſion the Roman governor applied to Paul and Barnabas, and not they to him. They avoided all appearance of ſeeking the countenance and ſupport of civil power, knowing that their religion ſtood in no need of ſuch aid to its ſucceſsful progreſs. On the contrary, in the corrupt ages of the church, you will find it was always the cuſtom to endeavour to bring over kings and princes to the chriſtian faith in the firſt place, and then, by the influence of the chiefs, the common people adopted it of courſe. But thoſe princes had generally political reaſons for profeſſing chriſtianity, and therefore their converſion is no argument in favour of the proper evidence of chriſtianity in after times. What cauſe of triumph would it have been to unbelievers of the preſent age, if the Jewiſh high prieſts, and the Roman governors,

had been converted in the firſt inſtance; and the body of the Jewiſh nation and of the Roman empire had been brought over to the ſame profeſſion afterwards. In what light would the tranſaction have been regarded at this day? Let this be conſidered by thoſe who object to the evidence of chriſtianity on account of the Jewiſh rulers, the Roman governors, and other perſons of power and influence, not having been converted in the firſt inſtance.

We are now accompanying Paul and Barnabas in their firſt progreſs, which began from Antioch, to preach the goſpel, and eſpecially to the Gentiles, tho' we ſhall find that wherever they came, they preached in the firſt place to the Jews only, that they might have no reaſonable cauſe of complaint that they were deſpiſed or overlooked, or even that a due preference was not given to them. From Antioch they firſt went to Cyprus, the country of Barnabas, where their miniſtry was honoured by the converſion of Sergius Paulus, the governor of the iſland, and where Elymas the magian, who oppoſed them, was miraculouſly ſtruck blind.

With reſpect to this miracle, I ſhould have obſerved to you, that the blindneſs was not to be perpetual, but only for a time. *Thou ſhalt be blind*, ſays Paul to him, *not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon*. The prediction, therefore, was two fold, no doubt to make it more evident, that the hand of God was in it. Had this Elymas been only ſeized with blindneſs, and ever after continued blind, it might have been ſuppoſed to have happened from various natural cauſes, tho' ſtill it would have been remarkable that it ſhould have taken place at this

particular

particular critical time, and immediately pronouncing that it ſhould be ſo. But recover his ſight afterwards, according delivered before he was ſeized with blind would leave no room to doubt of the hand of God being in it.

Thus were theſe *apoſtles*, as in one ſenſe we may call Barnabas as well as Paul, diſtinguiſhed in the outſet of their progreſs, which could not fail greatly to encourage them; and the news of it going before them wherever they went, would ſecure them a more favourable reception in other places.

13. Pamphilia was a maritime province of Aſia Minor, north-weſt of Paphos in Cyprus.

It is evident from the ſubſequent hiſtory, that John, or Mark, left theſe miſſionaries on account of the proſpect there was of the great difficulty or oppoſition they expected to meet with in this progreſs; and on this account Paul would not admit him to accompany him a ſecond time.

14. Piſidia is an inland province of Aſia Minor, north of Pamphilia.

This Antioch was a much leſs conſiderable city than the metropolis of Syria of the ſame name.

15. The great purpoſe for which the ſynagogues were erected among the Jews, which does not appear to have been in uſe till after the return from the Babyloniſh captivity, was the reading of the ſcriptures; and this was probably the principal means of preſerving that people from falling into idolatry, and of producing that inviolable attachment to their law and their religion,

by which they were for ever after, and are to this day diſtinguiſhed. The chriſtians, in imitation of the Jews, read both the books of the *New* as well as thoſe of the *Old Teſtament*, in their places of worſhip; and after the reading of the ſcriptures, any perſon preſent might, with the leave of the ruler of the ſynagogue among the Jews, or the biſhop or elders among the chriſtians, explain it, in a diſcourſe to the people; after which the chriſtians always proceeded to prayer, and the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper. Originally *preaching* was nothing more than this occaſional expounding of the ſcriptures, which were read in courſe.

Theſe two ſtrangers being invited to ſpeak, Paul takes the opportunity to lead the attention of his Jewiſh audience to the promiſes of God to the people of Iſrael by David, ſhewing them that they were fulfilled in Chriſt, to whom likewiſe John the Baptiſt, who was always popular among the Jews, gave witneſs. He alſo ſhews that ſeveral things in the ancient prophets were accompliſhed in Chriſt.

20. If we add the time of all the Judges together, we ſhall find they make this number of *four hundred and fifty years*; but ſome of theſe Judges muſt have been contemporary with others. For the whole period of the Iſraelites being governed by Judges, was by no means of that length. Paul might mean the whole period from the birth of Iſaac, in which the promiſes of God to Abraham began to be fulfilled, till the time of the prophet Samuel.

21. This muſt include part of the adminiſtration of Samuel.

25 He

25. He dwells more particularly on the teſtimony of John, becauſe it would not be lightly diſregarded by Jews, among whom he appears to have been very popular.

26. With great prudence the apoſtle ſays nothing to them at preſent of his commiſſion to preach to the Gentiles.

27. It is remarkable alſo how he indirectly apologiſes for the conduct of the Jewiſh rulers, not to exaſperate theſe Jews unneceſſarily.

30. It is impoſſible not to obſerve how, upon all occaſions, the apoſtle repreſents Chriſt as a perſon who ſpake and acted by a commiſſion from God, whoſe power it was that appeared in all his miracles, and in his reſurrection. Had he been God himſelf, or a great ſuper-angelic ſpirit, the maker of the world, who could not have been affected by the death of his body, there would have been no particular occaſion for the interpoſition of God to raiſe him from the dead. He might have raiſed himſelf by his own proper power. For if, as is ſuppoſed, he had made himſelf that body, he might have brought it to life again. But we ſee it was neceſſary that God ſhould raiſe him from the dead.

33. This ſecond pſalm is often quoted in the New Teſtament as referring to the Meſſiah, and this appears to have been the opinion of the Jews of that age.

34. In this he alludes to Iſaiah LV. 3.

35. This other pſalm is ps. XVI. 10.

36. To *ſee corruption*, is to *die*, which is probably all that David meant when he uſed the expreſſion. But

it was more literally fulfilled in Chriſt, who, tho' he did die, was not ſo long in the grave as to ſee corruption. But we are to judge for ourſelves as to the right application of paſſages in the Old Teſtament to Chriſt and the times of the goſpel, as well as the apoſtles, who would naturally make the moſt of theſe references, and in their circumſtances would probably imagine that there were more of them than there really were.

39. You will pleaſe to obſerve that Chriſt is not here ſaid to have purchaſed by his death and ſufferings the forgiveneſs of our ſins, but ſimply, that God had authoriſed him, as he had done other prophets before him, to aſſure men of pardon of their ſins upon repentance; and that this commiſſion reſpected all ſins without exception, and was not confined to thoſe for which proviſion was made in the ceremonial law of Moſes. At this time the Jews laid a moſt unreaſonable *ſtreſs* on the laws of Moſes, as if the favour of God neceſſarily accompanied the obſervance of them; forgetting that the declaration of the mercy of God to penitents was prior to the law of Moſes, and independent of it, as Paul in his epiſtles frequently urges.

41. This was a very awful warning of the judgments of God which would follow the rejection of the goſpel by the Jews. The paſſages the apoſtle quotes to them are to be found Iſaiah xxviii, 14, and Habak. i. 5.

42. Theſe Gentiles probably attended out of curioſity on this occaſion, or being devout perſons, like Cornelius, might have been in the habit of doing it. Alſo, they might have had ſome intimation that this preaching of Paul and Barnabas did not relate to the Jews only

only, but that the Gentiles were intereſted in it. For it was ſome years after the converſion of Cornelius; and the news of the preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles at Antioch in Syria, could not but have reached to the neighbouring cities, as this of Antioch in Piſidia. Beſides, the converſion of Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of Cyprus, was a more recent tranſaction, and probably known to them.

43. i. e. Adhered to the profeſſion which they had made of being chriſtians.

45. The Jews, proud of their privilege of being the peculiar people of God, could not bear to ſee the Gentiles ſo particularly noticed by the preachers of the goſpel. And if even the chriſtian Jews bore this ſo ill, as we have ſeen, it can be no wonder that it ſhould ſo highly offend thoſe who were not yet converted to chriſtianity. By the crouds of Gentiles drawn together by theſe chriſtians, when they had been able to make but little impreſſion upon them, in favour of the inſtitutions of Moſes, ſo as to make proſelytes of them, their envy and indignation would be raiſed to a ſtill higher pitch. It would naturally make them more inveterate againſt the goſpel, and on this account the apoſtles, with great prudence, had always preached to the Jews in the firſt place wherever they went. For after preaching openly to the Gentiles in any place, there was but little proſpect of gaining any more Jews.

46. They waxed bold in proportion to the oppoſition they met with, which required greater exertion on their part.

They

They were unworthy, that is they ſhewed by their conduct that they did not deſerve the favours that were offered them.

47. So plain are many of the prophecies concerning the benefits of the Meſſiah's kingdom extending to the Gentiles, and of their not being confined to the Jews only, that we are apt to wonder how they ſhould have been overlooked, or miſunderſtood. But the Jews had always interpreted them of the ſubjection of the Gentile world to the dominion of the Meſſiah; and when that idea was given up by the chriſtian Jews, they ſtill ſuppoſed that the Gentiles muſt become proſelytes to Judaiſm before they could be entitled to the bleſſings of chriſtianity.

48. By *ordained to eternal life*, we are to underſtand thoſe who were diſpoſed to receive the goſpel, and thoſe who had no invincible prejudice againſt it. For by *eternal life* we are to underſtand the goſpel, which is the means of bringing men to eternal life. That by any arbitrary decree of God, independent of the good diſpoſitions and good works of men, ſome ſhould be predeſtinated to eternal life, while others are doomed to eternal damnation, is a doctrine far from being favoured by the ſcriptures, and is ſo contrary to all idea of *equity* in the divine government, that it muſt be rejected at any rate. No religion can be true, and come from God, that is ſo unfavourable to virtue and goodneſs among men. The Scriptures, as well as reaſon, and the light of nature, uniformly ſpeak a very different language. The earneſt expoſtulations of the Almighty with ſinners ſufficiently

ently prove that they are naturally capable of having ſome real effect upon thoſe to whom they are addreſſed. Indeed, without this, the conduct of God towards men would be a moſt abſurd and cruel tantalizing of them, holding out to them, and earneſtly intreating their acceptance of, what they had no power of receiving. If perſons be abſolutely *dead*, and motionleſs, who would think of urging them to riſe and exert themſelves? And yet this is literally the caſe, according to the repreſentations that ſome make of religion.

50. Theſe were probably their own proſelytes, ſuch as our Saviour ſays were *tenfold more the children of hell than themſelves*, or thoſe who, like Cornelius, had been brought to the belief of the one true God, and therefore were well diſpoſed towards the Jews, and adopted their prejudices againſt the chriſtians.

They raiſed this perſecution by the intereſt they had with the magiſtrates of the place. All the perſecutions the chriſtians met with, then and long afterwards, aroſe from the Jews only. The Roman government had not then taken any umbrage at them.

51. This was to expreſs their own innocence and that the Jews themſelves were the cauſe of all the evils that would follow the rejection of the goſpel. This conduct of theirs was agreable to our Saviour's particular inſtructions.

Iconium is a town in Lycaonia, to the north of Antioch in Piſidia, and in the very centre of Aſia Minor.

52. To be *filled with the holy ſpirit* means their partaking of the miraculous gifts of the ſpirit, or ſome ſupernatural

pernatural powers, eſpecially that of ſpeaking unknown tongues, which ſhewed that the power of God accompanied the preaching of the goſpel in that early age. When by this means the truth and divinity of the goſpel was ſufficiently authenticated, thoſe ſupernatural gifts were properly withdrawn. We are now left to the natural influence of that doctrine which we have ſufficient reaſon to think was then preached with ſo much power. We ought, therefore, to give the greater attention to it; and utterly inexcuſable ſhall we be, if we do not, in a caſe ſo intereſting to us all. For what are all the concerns of this life, which is ſo tranſitory, to thoſe of another, which has no ending?

Ch. XIV. We are ſtill attending to the progreſs made by Paul and Barnabas to preach the goſpel to the idolatrous Gentiles, which was probably begun A. D. 45, and ended A. D. 47, or the beginning of 48. Their ſucceſs we have ſeen to have been conſiderable, notwithſtanding the moſt determined oppoſition from the moſt unbelieving Jews, and thoſe of the Gentiles with whom they had influence, and we ſhall ſee much of the ſame ſpirit in what is now before us.

1. Theſe were probably proſelytes, who attended the Jewiſh ſynagogues.

2. Of the influence the Jews had over the proſelytes we have had ſeveral examples. They were frequently more bigotted, and more violent, than the Jews themſelves.

5. They ſtoned them as blaſphemers. The intereſt of the Jews, in many places, was ſo great, that they were permitted to execute their own laws.

8. We

8. We have before had ſeveral inſtances of beggars labouring under incurable diſorders, being made the ſubjects of miracles, as, from the nature of the thing, no miracles could be more unexceptionable, their perſons, and their caſes, being known to almoſt every body.

9. It cannot be ſuppoſed that any faith in this lame man was neceſſary to his cure; for many cures had been performed where no ſuch faith is mentioned. But it appears to have been neceſſary that the perſon who wrought the miracle ſhould perceive himſelf a divine impulſe, called *faith*, to do it, and the apoſtle perceiving ſymptoms of the ſame divine impulſe upon the mind of the cripple himſelf, would be the more encouraged to pronounce his cure. Our Saviour, upon many occaſions, obſerved a ſimilar faith in thoſe who applied to him for a cure. In whatever manner this faith was produced, if it had been nothing more than a mere imagination, it could never have made a man walk who had never walked before, or make a man ſee who had been born blind.

The Greeks imagined that it was not uncommon for their gods to aſſume the likeneſs of men, and to travel up and down on the earth. In their mythology there are many ſtories of this kind. Jupiter, the chief of their gods, had often done ſo, and had ſometimes been attended by Mercury. Probably Barnabas was a man of a larger ſize, and of a better appearance than Paul, whoſe bodily appearance, he himſelf ſays, had nothing to recommend it, but who was the more active of the two, and the chief ſpeaker.

13. The

13. The temple and ſtatue of Jupiter were probably near the gate of the city. Theſe garlands were put both on the victims, and on the ſtatues of their gods.

14. This was to ſhew their abhorrence of theſe proceedings.

15. i. e. They had no natural advantages over themſelves, what they did being by the power of God. None of the heathens had imagined that the earth, the heavens, and the ſea, &c. had been the work of God, for they were ſuppoſed to have exiſted prior to their gods. The earlieſt, and the moſt diſtinguiſhed, of their divinities were the ſun, moon, and ſtars, together with the earth itſelf, and afterwards men, who had been deified by their ſurvivors.

19. This was probably after ſome interval of time, for the tranſition from a deſign to worſhip theſe preachers of the goſpel, to the ſtoning of them, *cannot* be ſuppoſed to have been very ſudden. But after ſome time, the people of this town, having had ſufficient knowledge of Paul and Barnabas, that they were nothing more than other men, might afterwards be perſuaded by the Jews who had great influence over them, that all their miracles were wrought by ſome evil ſpirits, for ſome unknown bad purpoſes, and thus be brought into all their meaſures.

26. Their rout on their return was through the ſame places through which they had made their progreſs, excepting Cyprus.

Ch. XV. We have now obſerved the progreſs of the goſpel about twenty years from the firſt promulgation

gation of it after the reſurrection and aſcenſion of Jeſus, and the deſcent of the ſpirit upon his apoſtles and followers. For the ſpace of about ten of theſe years, the preaching of it was confined to the Jews, or Jewiſh proſelytes, it being wiſely provided, that their minds ſhould not be prejudiced againſt the goſpel by the immediate offer of it to the Gentiles. But now that the great harveſt, as it were, of the Jews was got in, and the prejudices of the reſt of the nation were become inveterate, ſo that there remained little hope of gaining any more of *them*, it pleaſed God that, according to the council of his own will, and agreable to his benevolence to the whole race of man, as their common parent, the goſpel ſhould be preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, without ſubmitting to the burthenſome yoke of the Moſaic diſpenſation. That this was no ſcheme of the apoſtles, in order to extend their power and authority, is evident from the reluctance with which they were brought into it. They had the prejudices of other Jews, and thought that all the bleſſings of the goſpel were to be confined to themſelves, or ſuch Gentiles as ſhould firſt become proſelytes to their religion, by being circumciſed, and obſerving the whole law; and repeated miraculous interpoſitions, and new illuminations were neceſſary to make them adopt an idea ſo new and ſtrange to them as the preaching of the goſpel to uncircumciſed Gentiles.

In this commiſſion, however, the apoſtles Paul and Barnabas particularly diſtinguiſh themſelves. We have ſeen one of their journeys for this purpoſe through Cyprus, and the interior parts of Aſia Minor, after which they

they returned to Antioch, the place from which they had ſet out. We ſhall now ſee how they were received at Jeruſalem.

1. It is rather ſurpriſing that after the account which Peter gave of his conduct in preaching the goſpel to Cornelius and his friends, ten years before this time, in which it appeared that the whole was from God himſelf (the holy ſpirit having fallen upon Cornelius and his friends even before they had been baptized) any chriſtians ſhould remain diſſatisfied with it, and ſtill inſiſt, as we here ſee, that none ſhould be received into the chriſtian church unleſs they were firſt circumciſed, and conformed in all reſpects to the law of *Moſes*. They muſt have thought that the divine approbation of Cornelius and his friends, and the proviſion for preaching the goſpel to them, was not intended *to ſuperſede* their being circumciſed, and their being obliged to conform to the law of Moſes afterwards. In fact, they muſt have differed in *opinion* from the apoſtles, drawing different concluſions from the ſame facts. It is evident, indeed, that the mere opinion, or authority, of the apoſtles did not weigh much with the chriſtians of that age. They would follow them no farther than they were perſuaded they had a direct authority from God, or from Chriſt; and in a matter that was ſo ſacred with them as the obſervance of the *law*, which they had no doubt came from God, they were not eaſy to be convinced. This muſt be obſerved in excuſe for the very ſtrong prejudices of theſe very early Jewiſh chriſtians; prejudices which were never intirely removed, not even by all that Paul wrote to this purpoſe afterwards.

This

This fact is of conſiderable value in the evidences of chriſtianity. For can it be ſuppoſed that men with ſuch ſtrong prejudices as theſe in favour of the law of Moſes, and it's moſt burdenſome obſervances, and of courſe with every other Jewiſh prejudice, a prejudice not ſhaken by the authority of men divinely inſpired, ſhould have been brought to receive ſuch a Meſſiah as Jeſus, without the moſt overbearing evidence. It is plain that it was no influence or authority of the apoſtles, or any other perſons, who might be ſuppoſed to have any end to ſerve by this ſcheme, that could have any weight with them. They reaſoned and judged for themſelves, from facts that were known to themſelves, as well as to the apoſtles.

3. Theſe had not the ſtrong prejudices of the Jews of Jeruſalem, who are always mentioned as the moſt knowing in the law, and the moſt attached to it. The Scribes and Phariſees from Jeruſalem were always, in our Saviour's time, the moſt attentive to every thing in which religion was concerned, and yet it was at Jeruſalem that chriſtianity was firſt promulgated and received, a very unpromiſing ſcene to have been choſen for an impoſture.

7. It is evident that the apoſtles did not conſider themſelves as bound by any abſolute authority from God, or from Chriſt, reſpecting this caſe, for then there could have been no room for all this conſideration and reaſoning; tho' they had very plain facts to reaſon from, and therefore might draw a very ſafe concluſion. Still it was no more than a *concluſion from facts*, and not an expreſs formal *precept* from God, how to proceed in

the buſineſs. It has pleaſed God that, in all things, men ſhould uſe their own reaſon and diſcretion, and be conducted as little as poſſible by mere *authority*.

8. By this he ſhewed that they were then the proper ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom without circumciſion; ſo he reaſoned from facts.

9. By this he ſhewed that they were as pure and acceptable to God, tho' they had ſimply expreſſed their belief of the goſpel, as the Jews were in conſequence of having been circumciſed.

11. i. e. That the Jews and Gentiles will, *without* diſtinction, be made equally partakers of the bleſſings of the goſpel, here and hereafter.

12. This was adducing an evidence from fact, of the divine approbation of their miniſtry, having given his atteſtation of it by miraculous works, which they had been enabled to perform, tho' they had not directed any Gentile convert to be circumciſed.

13. This is that James who is called *the brother of Jeſus*, and the author of the epiſtle of James, and not James the brother of John, and one of the ſons of Zebedee. He had been beheaded by Herod, about ſix years before this time.

17. Peter, and after him Paul and Barnabas, had reaſoned from *facts*. Here James, in addition to this, alledges ancient *prophecies*, which he apprehended foretold that the bleſſings of the goſpel were not to be confined to the Jews; and there are many prophecies which certainly expreſs as much. But I muſt obſerve, as I have frequently done, that we are to judge for ourſelves with reſpect to the interpretation of ancient prophe-

prophecies, as well as the apoſtles, who were very apt to apply them without ſufficient caution. This prophecy of Amos, ſeems to relate to the final return of the Jews to their own country, rather than to the propagation of the goſpel.

28. Theſe things were either neceſſary in themſelves, or to avoid giving too much offence to the Jews.

We are not to infer from theſe words, that the apoſtles were conſcious of any particular inſpiration of the ſpirit of God on this occaſion, and ſtill leſs that other aſſemblies of chriſtians called *councils*, would neceſſarily be ſuperintended by the ſpirit of God, ſo as to be infallible in their decrees. But they inferred from the deſcent of the ſpirit upon the Gentile converts that they had a divine ſanction in not impoſing the yoke of the Jewiſh law upon ſuch converts. The particular articles, to the obſervance of which they thought proper to oblige the Gentile chriſtians were probably ſelected by themſelves, for what they thought to be good reaſons.

29. All theſe things had a connection with the heathen religion; fornication, and the moſt abominable impurities, being practiced in their religious rites, and blood being alſo eaten in them, ſome of their gods being thought to feed upon it. It is probable, therefore, that the deſign of all theſe prohibitions was to keep the new converts at the greateſt diſtance from idolatry, and to bring them back to the religion of the ancient patriarchs. For the precept not to eat blood was given to Noah, prior to the Jewiſh diſpenſation, perhaps to im-

preſs the minds of men with an idea of God being the giver of life, and therefore that the making uſe of animals for food (which implies taking their lives) ſhould be received as a permiſſion from God, who, at the ſame time, abſolutely forbid the taking away the *life* of man.

It is evident that the early chriſtians did not underſtand this precept of abſtaining from blood, as merely meant not to give offence to the Jews; for all the chriſtian world abſtained from eating blood till of late years. Auſtin particularly notices it as being ſo in his time, Spencer p. 606, and indeed ſtill do ſo, except in this weſtern part of the world. There are now alſo different opinions upon this ſubject with us; but the generality of chriſtians now think that as all diſtinction of meats is ſet aſide by the goſpel, at leaſt *with reſpect to* the Gentiles, *this* ſhould alſo; and that the general obſervation of our Saviour, that *nothing which goes into a man defiles him*, ought to extend to this caſe as well as every other. We ought, however, to remember, that the moral precepts of the goſpel, the love of our God and of our neighbour, are the only great things to be attended to, and that all matters of opinion, and peculiar practices, ought to be ſubſervient to them. Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind, without being cenſorious with reſpect to others.

We have ſeen in what manner the apoſtles and elders at Jeruſalem decided with reſpect to the obſervance of the Jewiſh rites by the Gentile converts, viz. that they ſhould not be obliged to be circumciſed, or conform to the law of Moſes, any farther than to abſtain from meats

meats offered to idols, from things strangled, and from fornication; all which things had an intimate connection with idolatry, being practised in their religious rites; and the eating of blood was particularly offensive to the Jews, so that as things then were, they could not have united in one body, having mutual intercourse and society, without some such agreement as this.

Having also attended Paul and Barnabas in their first journey to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, we now proceed to another of Paul; beginning with the countries he had visited before, and extending through other parts of Asia Minor and Greece. This was probably A. D. 51, or twenty two years after the death of Christ.

31. These are persons who had been sent with Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem, to carry the decree of the apostles and elders to Antioch. Prophets were teachers of a superior character and gifts, and seem not to have been confined to particular churches.

34. This *Silas* was called *Sylvanus*, by the Romans, and is frequently mentioned in this history, and in the epistles of Paul.

40. We are not to think it any thing extraordinary, or to be offended, that Paul and Barnabas, being men of like passions with other men, should have a difference of this nature. Barnabas being uncle to Mark, who was the son of his sister Mary, would naturally think more favourably of him; and he might know him better than Paul, who being of a quick and enterprising temper, might be too soon offended with the conduct of Mark, tho' it is most probable that he had

quitted them through fear. There is evidence enough in the epiſtles of Paul of his having been afterwards fully reconciled to Mark. It was he who afterwards joined himſelf particularly to Peter, and wrote his goſpel by his inſtructions. He is alſo ſaid to have been the firſt chriſtian biſhop of Alexandria in Egypt.

Ch. XVI. 1. The mother of Timothy, as we find in the epiſtle of Paul to him, was called Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois; and that they were both pious perſons. From a child, as Paul reminds him, he had been taught by them the holy ſcriptures. They were probably converted to chriſtianity in the former journey of Paul to Lyſtra.

The Jews had leſs objection to the marriage of Jewiſh women to the men of other nations, than to the marriage of their men with foreign women.

3. It ſhould ſeem that there was no abſolute neceſſity for the circumciſion of Timothy; but as he was to accompany Paul in his journey, and one of his parents being of Jewiſh extraction, it would have given too much offence to the Jews, and have rendered his miniſtry altogether ineffectual among them, if he had not been circumciſed. With reſpect to perſons whoſe parents were both Gentiles, as Titus, Paul boldly ſtood for the privileges of the Gentiles, and oppoſed circumciſion.

6. There is no particular mention of Paul preaching in Galatia, or of his ſucceſs there; but it muſt have been at this time that he planted thoſe chriſtian churches in this country, to which his epiſtle is directed.

8 This

8. This was a town on the ſea coaſt, built near the more ancient city of Troy, and as it is ſaid, out of the ruins of it.

10. We find a great variety of methods in which God was pleaſed to ſignify his will to thoſe who acted by commiſſion from him; and in many of them there was room left for exerciſing their own reaſon and judgment. In this caſe they were left to infer the divine will from the circumſtances of a dream.

11. This was an iſland in the Ægean ſea, or Archipelago.

It is obſervable, that from this time, Luke, the writer of this book, ſpeaks in the plural number. *We* did ſo and ſo, from which it is concluded that here he joined Paul, and it appears that he never left him afterwards, but attended him even in his voyage to Rome.

12. This was not the firſt, or chief city in Macedonia, for that was Theſſalonica; but it was the firſt Roman colony in that country. This colony was ſettled by Julius Cæſar, and enlarged by Auguſtus, as appears by coins that have been found there. On this account we find the citizens called themſelves Romans, and conſidered themſelves bound by the laws of Rome.

13. This was a proſeucha, or oratory, or a building, or incloſure made on purpoſe for pious people to reſort to, and perform their devotions in. Theſe buildings are ſaid to have been diſtinguiſhed from ſynagogues by their having no roofs, and there being no reading of the law in thoſe places. It is ſaid that they were commonly built in the neighbourhood of rivers, probably

for the convenience of bathing, which frequently accompanied the devotions of the Jews.

14. This does not imply any miraculous influence upon the mind of Lydia, any more than there was upon that of Pharaoh, whoſe heart God is ſaid to have hardened. But there is a proper ſenſe in which every thing in nature is aſcribed to God, the author of nature, and we are more particularly directed to conſider things in this light, when God, in the courſe of his providence, makes any natural uſe of the tempers and diſpoſitions of men. Thus the natural bad diſpoſition of Pharaoh was eminently ſubſervient to the divine purpoſes, and ſo alſo was the natural good diſpoſition of this Lydia. Beſides this opening of the heart of Lydia (which in the Jewiſh phraſeology only means a candid teachable diſpoſition) is only ſaid to have prepared her for hearing, or giving due attention *to the preaching of* Paul. What he ſaid had the influence which it naturally would have upon a mind previouſly well diſpoſed.

15. We cannot particularly ſay who were included in the *household* of Lydia, but certainly if ſhe had young children they muſt have been comprehended. Abraham was circumciſed with his houſehold, which we are informed included not only Iſhmael, who was then thirteen years old, but his ſlaves alſo. The circumciſion of his houſehold therefore, was a thing that reſpected Abraham himſelf only, and what it became him to do in the caſe. The apoſtles, therefore, having this clear caſe before them, and baptiſm being an inſtitution ſimilar to circumciſion, they would naturally apply it in

in the ſame indiſcriminate manner, that is, to all the proper houſehold of the perſon baptized. The baptiſm of a child, therefore, is not to be conſidered as any thing that is done in *the name of the child*, ſo as to lay it under any obligation in future life, but only as the act of the parent. It is what belongs to his profeſſion of chriſtianity, and being a chriſtian himſelf, he will of courſe think himſelf obliged to educate his children in the chriſtian faith.

16. *Prayer* here means *house of prayer*, or oratory, mentioned above. What is here mentioned as a *ſpirit of divination*, is in the original rendered a *ſpirit of python*, which is ſynonymous to *ob* in Lev. ix, 31. Spencer p. 426. ſuch as that with which the prieſts of the god Apollo were ſuppoſed to be inſpired. It was uſual for thoſe perſons who pretended to be inſpired by the heathen gods, and foretel things to come, to aſſume all the appearance of madneſs, and ſometimes they practiced ſuch rites, and treated themſelves in ſuch a manner, as actually produced a kind of phrenzy, or madneſs, and the uncommon and incoherent things which they pronounced in that ſtate of mind, accompanied with much violence of geſticulation, and ſtrangeneſs of aſpect, were attributed to ſome inviſible ſpirit, by which they were ſuppoſed to be agitated in that manner. Afterwards we find all kinds of inſanity aſcribed to the agency of ſome inviſible ſpirits or dæmons, and theſe being ſuppoſed to know more than men, their ſayings were obſerved, as, though ſeemingly obſcure and myſterious, proceeding from ſuperior knowledge, and thoſe who had the care and management of inſane perſons

ſons frequently availed themſelves of this circumſtance for the purpoſe of gain, encouraging people to reſort to them, to have their fortunes told, and to have difficult queſtions reſolved. In the eaſtern countries madmen are treated with particular reſpect to this day, and their ſayings noticed, as being inſpired.

As theſe inſane people had their lucid intervals, and were often perfectly ſenſible in ſome reſpects, tho' not in all, they were not ſtrangers to what was paſſing in the country; and there was often a mixture of knowledge and information in their incoherent raphſodies, as we ſee in the demoniacs of our Saviour's time, who ſometimes ſhouted after him, and called him what they had heard others ſay of him, *the Son of God*, and other appellations characteriſtic of the Meſſiah. So this woman having catched theſe words, perhaps from Paul himſelf, ſome of his companions, or others who had heard him ſpeak, repeated them in this manner.

18. i. e. He reſtored her to her right mind, ſo that ſhe called after him no more in that manner.

19. The market place, or forum, was the place in which the magiſtrates ſat to hear cauſes, and in which the people were always aſſembled on any intereſting occaſion, as at Rome.

21. Theſe Philippians, I have obſerved, were a colony of Romans, and were therefore bound by the Roman laws, according to which no new religion could be introduced without the leave of the ſenate, after an examination by proper officers.

22. This ſeems to have been a tumultuous and irregular proceeding, and they were ſtripped and beaten (which

(which was always done with great ſeverity) upon the naked body, without any regular trial.

24. They took all the precautions they could to prevent their eſcape, expecting no mercy themſelves from the magiſtrates who intereſted themſelves in the caſe.

25. It is impoſſible not to obſerve upon this occaſion, the power of a good conſcience, in enabling perſons to bear trials and perſecutions for the ſake of truth and obedience to God. On this occaſion we ſee our Saviour's promiſes fully verified, *blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you; rejoice and be exceeding glad.* He aſſured them that in that ſtate of perſecution they ſhould receive tenfold more in this preſent life, notwithſtanding their ſufferings.

Not that they were inſenſible to pain, but their inward ſatisfaction much more than balanced it. So here we ſee Paul and Silas more happy in priſon than their perſecutors who put them into it.

26. This could not have been the natural effect of an earthquake, but proves that this, as well as the opening of the door, and the looſing of the bands, were miraculous.

27. For then he muſt have borne the puniſhment that was to have been inflicted upon his priſoners, and many of them were probably ſentenced to death.

30. i. e. He brought them from the inner priſon, where, for their greater ſecurity, they had been confined, and this he naturally did, on finding that he had no power over them.

What the goaler preciſely meant by theſe words, in the hurry and confuſion in which he pronounced them,

is

is not quite certain. It might be only *What shall I do*, without any diſtinct meaning at all. But conſidering Paul's anſwer, and what follows, we may perhaps infer that he had been a hearer of Paul's preaching; and being now convinced of his priſoners being under the protection of God, and having a commiſſion from him, inquired about that *ſalvation*, concerning which they had preached, and which had been the ſubject of the inſane woman ſhouting.

31. Upon this I would obſerve, that tho' *faith in Chriſt*, or a belief in the chriſtian religion, is here and in other places mentioned as the only condition of ſalvation, it is always to be underſtood to be accompanied with *good works*, the proper fruits of faith. For upon all occaſions repentance and obedience are made eſſential to future happineſs; and nothing can be more contrary to the uniform tenor of the goſpel, than that a good diſpoſition of mind, and a virtuous conduct, are not eſſential to a good chriſtian. To all other pretenders to friendſhip with Chriſt, and intereſt in him, our Lord will ſay at the laſt, *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.*

33. This is the ſecond inſtance in this chapter of a whole houſehold being baptized, including, no doubt, young children, if there were any ſuch in them, for the reaſons that I have given before.

37. As Paul was free born, it is probable that his father had been made a freeman of Rome, perhaps for ſervices rendered to the ſtate, or it might have been purchaſed with money. It is well known to have been a law of the Roman empire, that no Roman citizen could

could be beaten with rods, and to claim the privilege falsely was punishable with death, by a law of the emperor Claudius, who was then reigning.

39. Paul insisting upon this piece of respect being paid him, was not only right in itself, and due to his character, who had been grossly insulted and abused, but would have a good effect with respect to the converts he had made in that place, and cause them to be treated with more respect when he was gone.

Ch. XVII. We have seen the effect of the first preaching of the gospel in Europe by the apostle Paul, accompanied by Silas, Timothy, and Luke. The former of these was chosen by Paul in preference to Mark, who went with Barnabas, because he had not shewn sufficient courage on a former occasion. In this we see Silas by no means deficient. Probably by his peculiar zeal and activity he had made himself more conspicuous than the other companions of Paul, in consequence of which he exposed himself to be apprehended, scourged, and imprisoned, along with him, while nothing is said of the sufferings of the rest; which however by no means implies that they were not sufficiently ready to do their duty, and to suffer in it also, if properly called to it.

The first opening of their commission, as we may call it, was at Philippi, a Roman colony in Macedonia. We shall now attend these missionaries to other towns in the same country.

1. These were all cities in Macedonia. Amphipolis was originally a famous colony of the Athenians, and Apollonia of the Corinthians, the former upon the same river

river Strymon with Philippi, and the latter near the ſea. Theſſalonica was the metropolis of the country. It was ſo called by Philip, the father of Alexander the great, on account of a victory gained by him in Theſſaly. It is even now a place of ſome note, called *Salonichi*, the moſt commodious ſea port in thoſe parts.

Here the apoſtle made ſome ſtay, and founded a chriſtian church, to which he addreſſed two of his epiſtles, thoſe to the Theſſalonicans, and the firſt that he wrote. Here it is probable that Luke left him for the preſent, while Silas and Timothy continued with him.

2. Paul, tho' he had received ſo many provocations from the Jews, did not neglect them; but wherever there was a ſynagogue, he addreſſed himſelf to them in the firſt place. At Philippi there was no proper ſynagogue, but only an oratory, or houſe of prayer. But this being the capital of the country, the Jews were probably more numerous, and better accommodated. Beſides the propriety of preaching the goſpel to the Jews in the firſt place, the aſſemblies of the Jews, proſelytes, and other devout perſons at the ſynagogues, afforded the apoſtle a good opportunity of making himſelf and his buſineſs generally known. The heathens had no aſſemblies of this kind. Their worſhip conſiſted of nothing but ſacrifices, riotous, obſcene, or at the beſt, unmeaning rites, without any proviſion for the inſtruction of the people, or public prayers. When therefore there was no Jewiſh ſynagogue in a place, we find the apoſtle addreſſing the people in the market places, or wherever he found people aſſembled, and at leiſure to converſe.

3. The great objection to the gospel with the Jews was then, and is still, a *suffering Messiah*. This point, therefore, the apostle particularly labours.

5. Here the word *lewd*, is not used in it's modern sense, but as it was used when this translation of the scriptures was made, namely, for *rude* uncivilised persons.

This Jason is thought by some to have been a Jew and a relation of Paul. At least in the epistle to the Romans, he mentions a person of this name who was his kinsman.

6. We must learn from this not to be moved by popular clamour, or popular prejudices, which are always alarmed at any thing which appears to be *innovation* in religion, how much soever it may be for the service of truth and of mankind. The same offence was given by the Reformers from Popery, and in the same light is every person regarded, who even at this day, distinguishes himself by his zeal against prevailing errors, and false notions in religion.

7. This must have been advanced by those who had perhaps only heard some confused account of Paul's preaching, or might apprehend that Jesus, being alive, claimed their obedience, contrary to their allegiance to the Roman emperor; and in general they are the most ignorant who are the foremost in clamour and persecution against the friends of truth.

10. This is a very short account of what passed at the first preaching of the gospel in Thessalonica, where from Paul's epistles to the christians in that place, he appears to have made a considerable stay, and to have had

had very great ſucceſs. The three ſabbaths that he is ſaid to have preached in the Jewiſh ſynagogue in this place was probably only the beginning of his preaching, and afterwards he probably preached in the houſe of Jaſon. Here many were converted from idolatry. Here Paul worked miracles himſelf, and imparted ſpiritual gifts to others. Here he laboured with diligence night and day, that the goſpel might not be burthenſome to the new converts; and to this place the chriſtians of Philippi ſent again and again to his neceſſities. Theſe and other circumſtances are indications of the long ſtay that Paul made in this place, and of his great ſucceſs there. We ſee by Luke not mentioning theſe particulars in the book of Acts, that he wrote with no oſtentation, not making the moſt of every thing that might be for the credit of the apoſtle, or of the goſpel: If miraculous gifts had not been very common in that age, he would naturally have enlarged upon them here.

Berea was another city in Macedonia, not far from Pella, the birth place of Alexander the great. Here the Jews were more candid, and better diſpoſed than thoſe of Theſſalonica. The Jews in general boaſted of their *nobility*, as we may call it, in their deſcent from Abraham, and they could trace their origin higher than any other people in the world, but theſe were ſtill more noble in a better ſenſe of the word.

14. According to the beſt reading and interpretation of the original, there was no artifice or deceit implied in this conduct of the apoſtle, tho' there would have been nothing blamable in his conduct if he had withdrawn

drawn himſelf from the power of his enemies in the manner here repreſented.

16. Paul having quitted Berea, where he was well received, after having been driven by the perſecution of the Jews from Theſſalonica, left Timothy and Silas there, and proceeded to Athens, where he waited for his companions. This was probably A. D. 52. As Athens was the greateſt ſeat of learning in all the Roman empire at that time, and had ever been diſtinguiſhed for philoſophy and all the liberal arts, and where almoſt all the Roman youth of family and fortune were educated, we cannot help being intereſted to know in what manner Paul, the firſt preacher of the goſpel in that place, conducted himſelf, and what kind of reception he met with there, and ſeveral things are well worth our notice with reſpect to both. We ſhall ſee an example of great prudence in the manner in which Paul behaved in thoſe peculiar circumſtances, very different from that of a wild enthuſiaſt, but worthy of one who was fully perſuaded that he had a commiſſion from the moſt high God, to inſtruct mankind in the moſt important and intereſting truths; while in the Athenians in general, we ſhall ſee what an obſtacle to the reception of new truth is a previous high conceit of men's own wiſdom. Not being aware of their own ignorance, they had no deſire of farther knowledge, and treated with ſupercilious contempt, all who preſumed to inſtruct them.

It is well known to all perſons acquainted with hiſtory, that of all the cities of Greece, Athens was the moſt diſtinguiſhed for the multitude of its temples and

altars; the people being the moſt attached to the religious rites and ceremonies, which had been handed to them from their anceſtors. It was on the pretence of attempting an innovation in religion, that the enemies of Socrates, the moſt eminent of all the philoſophers, procured his condemnation in this city.

From this ſtate of Athens, the ſeat of learning and philoſophy, it is impoſſible not to obſerve how improbable it was that the world in general ſhould ever have been reformed from idolatry without divine revelation. It is evident, that, as the apoſtle ſays, *the world by its own wiſdom knew not God*, and when the true knowledge and worſhip of him was loſt in the world, they were never likely to regain it. In a city where the common people were ſo ſuperſtitiouſly attached to their religious rites, and where the better ſort were ſo conceited of their wiſdom and philoſophy, there was no great proſpect of ſucceſs for Paul, whoſe generous and benevolent ſpirit was much moved at the proſpect.

17. We ſee the zeal, as well as the prudence, of Paul in his whole conduct at Athens. He not only preached to the Jews and their proſelytes in their ſynagogue, but entered into converſation on the ſubject of religion with all perſons who were diſpoſed to hear him, and with perſons of all ranks and conditions, not excepting the profeſſors of philoſophy, who were numerous there.

18. The Epicureans and Stoics were the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſects of philoſophy at that time, and the moſt oppoſite to one another in their general maxims and tenets, as much ſo as the Phariſees and Sadducees among

mong the Jews. The Epicureans, who did not chuſe to deny that there were gods, held that they lived at their eaſe, and took no thought about the affairs of men, who had come into being without their concurrence; and they held that pleaſure was the great end of life. On the other hand, the Stoics, conſidering the ſouls of men as parts of the great ſoul of the univerſe, or God, held that they were ſufficient for their own happineſs in the practice of virtue, to which they made great pretenſions. They pretended to be ſuperior to all pain and evil; and when they died, the moſt prevailing opinion among them was, that their ſouls, which had been originally detached from the great ſoul of the univerſe, would be abſorbed into again; ſo that neither they, nor the Epicureans, had any expectation of a proper ſtate of retribution after death.

As the heathens worſhipped many allegorical perſonages, ſuch as *fevers*, *ſhame*, *famine*, &c. they who heard Paul preach about a *reſurrection*, a word to which they had not been uſed, without giving particular attention to his meaning, might poſſibly imagine that it was ſome new divinity, or by *ſtrange gods*, they might mean a new ſyſtem of religion in general.

Tho' there are ſome traces of the doctrine of a reſurrection having been known to the heathens, and even to the early Greek philoſophers, it was then diſcarded and ridiculed. This was probably the original revelation of God to mankind, and always retained by the Jews. In the heathen world it was ſupplanted by the doctrine of a *ſeparate ſoul*, capable of being happy or miſerable when the body was in the grave, which I

conceive to be unknown to the writers of the Old and New Teſtament.

19. Areopagus was the moſt reſpectable court of Juſtice of Athens and all Greece, conſiſting of perſons of the greateſt age and unblemiſhed reputation, and they had cognizance of all matters of religion. Their court was held upon a hill, in the open air, where the Judges ſat upon benches of ſtone. Paul had not been brought before this court upon any accuſation, but merely to give authentic information concerning his doctrine, as it is probable that there were various and uncertain reports ſpread abroad concerning it.

21. This was always the character of the Athenians, and as this city was the reſort of perſons from all parts of the world, their curioſity would continually be excited and gratified.

22. i. e. Much addicted to religion, or the worſhip of inviſible powers. He ſhews his addreſs in not inſulting them at the opening of his ſpeech, by which he muſt naturally have wiſhed to gain their attention and good will.

23. That there were in Athens altars erected to *unknown Gods*, is evident from ancient writers. Theſe were probably erected on occaſion of public calamities, which they aſcribed to ſome gods whom they had not been uſed to worſhip, but did not know whom. Paul had the addreſs to take a proper advantage of this circumſtance, to lead them to the worſhip not of a *new God*, for that would have been criminal by their laws, but of that God to whom all national calamities, and all national bleſſings, were owing, and of whom they were

ignorant.

ignorant. The ſuperiority of this God to thoſe whom they had worſhipped, he proceeds to explain.

24. None of the heathens, not even theſe wiſe Athenians, had any notion that their gods had made the world, or were prior to it. The world they thought to be eternal, and that the gods, in ſome way or other, ſprang from it. This great God who made all things could not ſtand in need of the ſervices of man, which was the idea the generality of the heathens had of their gods, who were repreſented as being proud of the attention and ſervices of men, and generally as feaſting upon the fumes of ſacrifices.

26. This doctrine of the providence of God was the very reverſe of that of the Epicureans, who thought that the gods took no care of human affairs. It is poſſible alſo that by Paul's obſerving that God was the common parent of all mankind, he might mean to intimate that he laid no great ſtreſs on the diſtinction between Jews and Gentiles, which the Jews, whom they had before ſeen in their city, had no doubt boaſted of.

28. The marks of the being and providence of God ſhould have led mankind to the knowledge of God; thoſe evidences of natural religion being obvious to all mankind. This quotation is from the poet Aratus, who was of Cilicia, the country of Paul. It is alſo found in another heathen poet. But it is not probable that theſe poets had the ſame idea of the derivation of the human race from God, that Paul had.

29. The heathens thought that by certain ceremonies of conſecration, the intelligence and power of their gods were brought to reſide in their ſtatues, of metal,

wood, or ſtone. But as the powers of man have no ſuch reſidence, it muſt be very improbable that the powers of the gods ſhould reſide in ſuch materials, which had nothing more than the external forms of men. And yet before they made images in the form of men, the heathens had only pillars to repreſent their gods.

32. Paul having given this repreſentation of the ſtate of the heathen world, with reſpect to the knowledge and worſhip of God, proceeds to the proper opening of his commiſſion as a meſſenger from God, informing them that though God, out of his unſearchable wiſdom, had not hitherto interpoſed to check their depravity, he had now, in his own proper time, done it, and invited all men to repent and reform their lives; aſſuring them that he would require an account of their conduct, and give to all mankind according to their works, having fixed a time for that purpoſe; and as an aſſurance, and ſpecimen of it, he had already raiſed up Jeſus Chriſt, who had been put to death by his enemies, to this ſtate of eternal life. But having made this general introduction to his account of the proper evidences of Chriſtianity, and of his miſſion, he was not permitted to proceed any farther. The Epicureans among them probably laughed at the very mention of the reſurrection of the dead, and were wholly indiſpoſed to give any attention to the proofs of it. Others, however, perhaps ſome of the Stoics, who had ſome general idea of the deſtruction of the preſent world, and of the renovation of all things afterwards, wiſhed to hear Paul explain himſelf farther on the ſubject. But if they did, it is probable that, finding his ideas ſo very different from

theirs on that ſubject, they would have been little leſs diſpoſed to receive it than the Epicureans were.

In the ſame light manner, without any ſerious examination, do the generality of modern unbelievers reject the goſpel. And in all caſes the ſtrongeſt evidence will not produce conviction, unleſs it meet with a mind diſpoſed to receive it; and there are *prejudices* ſufficient to prevent the reception of any truth, how evident ſoever in itſelf, and to minds properly diſpoſed. Unleſs the ſoil be prepared for the ſeed, it can never take root, and the plant come to perfection, how proper ſoever it be in itſelf. Happy are they whoſe minds are free from ſuch prejudices as now indiſpoſe many to embrace the goſpel, which affords ſuch excellent means of happineſs here, and ſuch a ſufficient aſſurance of immortality hereafter.

34. It does not appear that Paul worked any miracle at Athens, thō' he had done ſo at other places. But perſons who were ſo indiſpoſed to attend to the evidence that had already been given in other places, were unworthy of having any produced before themſelves. Indeed, it was not *evidence* that they objected to, but the *thing itself*, the doctrine of a *reſurrection*, which they probably thought incapable of being proved by any evidence.

Ch. XVIII. The apoſtle Paul having made but a ſhort ſtay at Athens, where he remained unaccompanied by Timothy and Silas, and where he gained ſome, but not many, converts, as appeared in the laſt chapter, proceeded in his journey to other parts of Greece.

1. Corinth was one of the moſt wealthy and luxurious cities in Greece. It was remarkably addicted to voluptuouſneſs. There was in it a temple of Venus, to which belonged, it is ſaid, a thouſand proſtitutes, and, like other poliſhed Greeks, the Corinthians were great admirers of eloquence.

2. The baniſhment of the Jews from Rome by the emperor Claudius, is mentioned by hiſtorians; and from the manner in which one of them ſpeaks of it, it might ſeem to have ariſen from ſome faction or diſturbance occaſioned by the preaching of the goſpel. It appears to have been preached at Rome about this time, but by whom is not known; and the Jews oppoſing it, as in other places, might perhaps have given riſe to the diſturbance which alarmed the timid temper of Claudius. This baniſhment of the Jews, being only an order of the emperor, and not a decree of the ſenate, it expired with his death, about three years afterwards.

This Aquila and his wife were perhaps chriſtians before this time, or they might be made ſo by Paul.

3. I have obſerved before, that all the Jews, even thoſe of the moſt wealthy families, were brought up to ſome art or profeſſion, by which they could, if reduced to indigence, get their bread. This cuſtom is ſtill generally obſerved in the Eaſt; and if it have no other uſe, it very properly reminds youth of the uncertainty of every thing in this world. It tends to prepare the mind for all events, even the moſt calamitous. Paul choſe to live by the labour of his hands, rather than be burthenſome to his new converts, to cut off all ſuſpicion of

his preaching for the ſake of living in idleneſs. This he makes mention of in his epiſtles. No man comes into the world to be idle, and it is far more reputable to live by one's own labour, than upon the unearned benefactions of others.

4. Here, as in other places, the apoſtle preached to the Jews in the firſt place, making uſe of their ſynagogues, and they abounded in all places of note. And as the Jews were zealous to infuſe the knowledge of the one true God, and often ſucceeded in *this*, where they made no proper proſelytes, their inſtructions were a valuable preparation for the preaching of the goſpel.

5. Perhaps Paul heard from them of the happy effect of the preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles, without any regard to the Jews, which had been the caſe particularly in Theſſalonica. And, having had little ſucceſs with the Jews at Corinth, he was urged to come to ſome concluſion with them, preſſing them either to embrace the goſpel, after having heard it ſufficiently explained and enforced, or to reject it; which it ſeems they generally did.

7. He was ſuch a perſon as Cornelius, and there appeared to have been many of this character at this time. Such was the happy effect of the Jewiſh doctrine concerning God.

11. From Corinth Paul wrote both the epiſtles to the Theſſalonians, which were the firſt that he ever wrote, hence he alſo wrote to the Gallatians.

In both theſe places he had made but a ſhort ſtay, and they had miſtaken many important articles of his doctrine

doctrine, as will appear when we come to conſider of thoſe epiſtles.

12. This Gallio was brother to the famous philoſopher Seneca, who gives him an excellent character. By Luke's ſpeaking of the deputy, or proconſul of *Achaia*, which had not always been governed by a proconſul, but was at this particular time, he appears to have been well acquainted with the political ſtate of thoſe times, which is an evidence of the hiſtory being genuine, as every other circumſtance mentioned or alluded to in this book proves.

13. The Jews ſeem to have been indulged with a power over their countrymen, to compel them to the obſervance of their own laws, when they did not interfere with the civil ſtate of the countries in which they reſided. Perhaps they had ſentenced him to ſome puniſhment before, and wiſhed to have it confirmed by the Roman governor, as the Jews at Jeruſalem did in the caſe of our Saviour.

16. Gallio might eaſily perceive the frivolous charges of the Jews againſt Paul, and that they had nothing to do with the peace and good order of ſociety, which as a civil magiſtrate, was his only object.

17. This revenge which the Greek friends of Paul took of his perſecutors ſeems to have been an irregular proceeding near the tribunal of Gallio, which was probably in the forum, in the open air, and tho' within the notice of Gallio, he thought proper to neglect it as of no conſequence.

The words *all the Greeks* are wanting in the Cambridge MSS. and three other MSS. read *all the Jews took*

took Sosthenes, who had been a chief ruler of the ſynagogue, but was never a convert to chriſtianity. According to this reading the outrage here mentioned was committed, not by the friends of Paul, as our copies might intimate, but by his enemies, who were diſappointed in the decree of Gallio, who, tho' he ſaw it, did not think proper to notice it.

18. We are not well acquainted with the cuſtoms of the Jews in making vows. It was however a conſiderable part of their religion, as appears from the book of pſalms to make vows concerning particular duties, eſpecially on account of particular deliverances; and when theſe vows were diſcharged, the cuſtom ſeems to have been to ſhave the head, and then perform certain ſacrifices in the temple at Jeruſalem. This cuſtom ſerved to preſerve a ſenſe of God and of his providence upon the mind.

Cenchrea was a ſea port town in Corinth on the Ægean ſea.

21. This was perhaps to diſcharge his vow.

22. i. e. To Jeruſalem.

23. This third progreſs of the apoſtle to preach the goſpel probably commenced A. D. 54.

24. He himſelf had probably been baptized by John, but it is moſt probable that he had heard of Chriſt afterwards, and that he preached his goſpel without any particular inſtruction.

25. He taught with exactneſs as far as he knew, which was only what had been taught by John. W.

28. By his eloquence Apollos ſeems to have attached many of the Corinthians to him in preference to Paul

Paul, which, however, gave no umbrage to this apoſtle, who ſays, I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increaſe.

Ch. XIX. 1. We have now finiſhed the account of Paul's ſecond progreſs to preach the goſpel, in which he viſited Greece, and ſpent about three years, chiefly at Corinth, where a conſiderable chriſtian church was formed. Thence he returned by way of Epheſus to Jeruſalem. But having diſcharged his vow, he immediately returned to Antioch, and thence ſet out on his third progreſs A. D. 53, going firſt through Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the churches which he had eſtabliſhed there in his preceding progreſs. While Paul was engaged in the upper parts of Aſia, Apollos, the eloquent Jew above mentioned, driven from Rome by the perſecution of Claudius, came to Epheſus, from which place he went to Corinth. We ſhall now attend to the apoſtle Paul on his return from viſiting the churches in Galatia and Phrygia.

7. This is a pretty remarkable part of the goſpel hiſtory, and is attended with ſome difficulties. The ſubject of John's preaching was that *men ſhould repent*, the belief of the ſpeedy approach of one greater than he, who would baptize with the *holy ſpirit*, as he had done with *water* only. Now as theſe diſciples had not heard of the holy ſpirit, it is probable they had not had any regular inſtruction from John, but only from ſome of his diſciples, who were imperfectly acquainted with his doctrine. Had they been inſtructed by John himſelf, and been baptized by him, it is not probable that they would have been baptized again. When our Lord

Lord himſelf began to preach and to baptize, that is by his diſciples, the *preaching* and the *baptism*, alſo ſeem to have been the very ſame with thoſe of John. His doctrine was *repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, and it cannot be ſuppoſed that thoſe who were baptized by our Saviour's own directions, were baptized again by the apoſtles after the deſcent of the ſpirit, or that they were baptized again themſelves, who had been baptized only by John. It ſeems probable that whenever the apoſtles found any that had been baptized either by John or themſelves before our Saviour's death, and who continued in the faith of the goſpel, they imparted to them the gift of the holy ſpirit by the impoſition of their hands, without any farther baptiſm.

I would obſerve upon this occaſion, that as we have no reaſon to think that John baptized with any ſuch form of words as *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, that form cannot be neceſſary to proper baptiſm, nor do the apoſtles themſelves, as I have obſerved, ſeem to have thought themſelves bound to recite that peculiar form of words, ſince we have no account of their baptizing in any other form than in the name of Jeſus Chriſt.

9. Till this time the chriſtians had met for public worſhip in the Jewiſh ſynagogue; but from this time they formed a ſeparate aſſembly of their own. This Tyrannus was perhaps an orator, or philoſopher.

10. Epheſus was the capital of that diſtrict which was more properly called Aſia. This brings the hiſtory of Paul, and of the preaching of the goſpel, to about A. D. 56.

It was during the ſtay of Paul at Epheſus, or about A. D. 56, that he wrote his firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, in conſequence of having been applied to by them to ſolve ſome difficulties which had occurred to them, and being diſturbed by factions among themſelves, of which an account will be given when I conſider that epiſtle.

12. Theſe miracles ſeem to be more extraordinary than any that we read of, except thoſe performed by our Saviour himſelf on perſons at a diſtance. They exceed thoſe performed by Peter, when all thoſe who had laid in his way, ſo that his ſhadow might fall upon them, were cured. Theſe frequent and illuſtrious miracles ſeem to have been neceſſary at the firſt promulgation of chriſtianity, that each diſciple might, as it were, have *the witness in himself*, by the communication of ſome miraculous gift. Had theſe been *only* pretended miracles, or deceptions, ſo many of them would not have been attempted, as the hazard of a detection would have been ſo great, eſpecially in ſuch a city as Epheſus. But as a very conſiderable chriſtian church was eſtabliſhed there, and continued for ages, we may ſafely conclude that there was no impoſition in the caſe.

13. We learn from Joſephus, that many of the Jews pretended a power of caſting out demons by the invocation of the names of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, or that of Solomon, and in this they uſed many ſuperſtitious magical ceremonies. Perhaps theſe Jews finding their own methods unſucceſsful, and hearing that Paul caſt out demons in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, thought that his ſucceſs depended upon the invocation of a more powerful

powerful *name only*, and therefore that having the *name* they could do it as well as he.

15. This man, whoſe diſorder was madneſs, might not have been at all times raving mad, but have had lucid intervals, ſo that he had heard of perſons in his caſe being relieved by Paul, or Jeſus whom he preached; and not being cured by theſe people, and his diſorder coming upon him with great violence, he behaved in this frantic manner.

17. It appeared from this unſucceſsful attempt of theſe Jews, that madneſs was not cured by any charm connected with the uſe of any powerful words, but was done by the power of God accompanying the preaching of his goſpel, to which it was a confirmation.

19. Probably fifty thouſand *ciſtophori*, a ſmall piece of ſilver coin, about half the weight of a Roman denarius, by which it appears from Cicero that ſums of money were computed in Aſia, ſo that the whole ſum would amount to abount eight hundred pounds ſterling.

Magical arts conſtituted a great part of the abſurd ſuperſtition of the ancient idolatry; and the minds of men were kept in a ſtate of ſhameful bondage by theſe deluſions. It was true religion, and not philoſophy, that emancipated the minds of men from this miſerable ſervitude. By this we are convinced of the abſurdity of all attempts to pry into futurity, or to controul the courſe of nature, which God alone can command, and which he changes, not in conſequence of the will or the arts of men, but at his ſovereign pleaſure, and for the greateſt and moſt valuable purpoſes. The more we know

know of the fooliſh, but often horrid ceremonies to which the ancients had recourſe, for the purpoſe of prying into futurity, or gaining any particular purpoſe, the more thankful we ſhall be for the light of the goſpel.

It were to be wiſhed that all ſimilar ſuperſtitions were baniſhed from the chriſtian world. We have many remains of theſe things ſtill among us; but true religion and good ſenſe together, will no doubt, put an end to them at laſt. It is no inconſiderable evidence of the divinity of the Jewiſh religion, that while all other nations were entirely devoted to magical rites, divination, and necromancy, the Jews were taught to hold all theſe things in deſerved abhorrence and contempt. How came that ſtupid people, as unbelievers generally repreſent them, to be ſo much more enlightened than their neighbours, whoſe ſuperior wiſdom was ſo much boaſted of? How came they to be wiſer than the Greeks and the Egyptians?

22. i. e. The proper or proconſular Aſia, of which Epheſus was the capital.

23. i. e. About chriſtianity, which Paul preached, and which gave great offence to the Jews.

24. At Epheſus there was a moſt magnificent temple of the goddeſs Diana, which was originally *the moon*. The temple was built at the common expence of all the cities in Aſia, and was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It had been burnt down twice before this time, but had always been rebuilt with as much expence and ſplendour as before, to that it was as large as the moſt admired ſtructure of its kind in the whole heathen world

world, and by far the moſt magnificent, ſo as to come the neareſt to the temple at Jeruſalem.

Theſe ſhrines were probably ſmall models of the temple, and of the image of Diana which it contained, made of metal, and ſold to ſtrangers, who viſited Epheſus, and came to worſhip there.

26. It was a maxim with the heathens, that after an image had been *conſecrated*, which was done with much ceremony, the ſpirit, or the inviſible power of the god whom it repreſented was brought to reſide in it, ſo that it was itſelf a proper object of worſhip. Theſe ceremonies were firſt deviſed by thoſe who worſhipped the heavenly bodies, for the uſe of the worſhippers when they were below the horizon, and therefore inviſible to them, and were afterwards extended to dead men, who were of courſe wholly abſent from them, and the images were at firſt mere pillars of ſtone, before they had the form of men.

27. We ſee here what we may ſee every day, how ready men are to make uſe of religion, good or bad, true or falſe, as a cover for their own private views. The real object of Demetrius was to ſecure his gain, but the pretence was a zeal for his religion, which alone would intereſt others, and induce them to join with him.

The reaſon why not only Demetrius, but the heathens in general, took ſo much umbrage at the progreſs of chriſtianity, was, that it was a religion utterly hoſtile to every ſpecies of heatheniſm; whereas the different kinds of heatheniſm were tolerant with reſpect to each other; it being a generally received opinion, that the particular religion of each country and people, were

proper for that country and people, and therefore, although they were different, they did not interfere with each other. But chriſtianity was an utter enemy to them all, and aimed at their extirpation, which at length it effected, when reaſon and philoſophy had failed. Thus was verified what our Saviour declared, that no man comes to the father, or to the knowledge and worſhip of the true God, but by him, and alſo what Paul ſays, that *the world by wiſdom knew not God*.

29. This was a large building, open to the air, in which cauſes were probably tried.

31. They were probably the magiſtrates, or chief prieſts, who preſided over the games in honour of the goddeſs, who thought well of Paul, and wiſhed to ſcreen him from danger.

32. This is often the caſe in popular tumults, the concourſe of ſome, drawing in others, before they know the reaſon of it.

33. This they did perhaps with a view to his pleading the common cauſe againſt the worſhip of images, but perhaps willing to put him to ſome danger of his life for having deſerted them.

34. And therefore a profeſſed enemy to their religion.

37. It is probable that here, as well as at Athens, Paul had been cautious to ſay nothing that would unneceſſarily give offence to the people, or their religion, tho' he abſtained from all criminal compliance with it, or countenance of it. We are not to ſeek, but to avoid perſecution, as far as conſcience is not concerned.

38. i. e. If he can prove that the chriſtians have done them any real injury.

36. i. e.

39. i. e. In relation to religion in general, and any inſults offered to it. A proper aſſembly, he ſays, ſhould be convened for the purpoſe, and proper notice given of it.

40. i. e. By the Romans, who were very attentive to popular commotions, which might give diſturbance to the government.

Ch. XX. In the preceeding chapter we had an account of the tranſactions of Paul at Epheſus, in his third apoſtolical progreſs. In this city, the metropolis of Proconſular Aſia, he continued near three years till A. D. 56, teaching in the ſchool of one Tyrannus, till the number of proſelytes he made, alarmed thoſe whoſe intereſt it more immediately was to ſupport the worſhip of Diana, who had a moſt magnificent temple there. This occaſioned a great tumult, which alarmed the magiſtrates, and being the friends of Paul, or perceiving that the proceedings againſt him and his friends were violent and irregular, and apprehending that ſome umbrage would be given to the Romans, they interpoſed to ſtop the proceedings. It ſeems, however, that, upon this event Paul ſaw reaſon to quit the place, and proceeded to preach the goſpel elſewhere.

2. It appears from comparing different parts of Paul's epiſtles, that while he was at Epheſus he had ſent Titus to Corinth, with his firſt epiſtle to the Chriſtians of that city, and that he was very anxious to hear the effects of it, which he did not till after he arrived in Macedonia. But then it gave him great ſatisfaction, as his epiſtle had been the means of allaying the diſturbances which had ariſen in that place. He had alſo left Timo-

thy behind him at Epheſus on account of the unſettled ſtate of the church there, by reaſon of Alexander, and other Jewiſh converts, introducing from the philoſophy of thoſe times, principles utterly ſubverſive of the goſpel. These men pretended to great knowledge of nature and celeſtial things, and deſpiſed the ſimplicity of the apoſtles. But, believing the general facts upon which the truth of chriſtianity was founded, they made a mixed kind of ſyſtem, partaking of both, the particulars of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak of when I treat of the epiſtles. This is the firſt time that we have any diſtinct account of this philoſophical chriſtianity.

Paul, being arrived in Macedonia, wrote his firſt epiſtle to Timothy, who was then at Epheſus, and it chiefly reſpected the ſtate of things in that place, where thoſe principles above mentioned, commonly called *the Gnoſtic hereſy*, appear to have gained much ground.

In this journey of Paul to *Macedonia* he appears to have preached the goſpel alſo in *Illyricum*, which bordered upon Macedonia to the weſt, and about this time alſo he appears to have been in Crete, but when, or upon what occaſion, he made this voyage, we are not told. From Macedonia alſo, Paul wrote the ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians expreſſing his ſatisfaction in the effect of his firſt; and preſently after he proceeded to that place.

3. It was during this abode of Paul at Corinth that he wrote the epiſtle to the Romans. The *lying in wait* here ſpoken of may poſſibly refer to ſome attempts of the unbelieving Jews to ſeize the money which he had

been

been collecting in Greece for the poor christians at Jerusalem.

4. It is thought by some that these persons attended him with the contributions from their several churches, and Timothy, one of these, might bring those from Ephesus.

5. Here Luke again speaks of himself. Perhaps he had been left at Philippi, and now joined Paul when he arrived there again.

6. This passover was in A. D. 58. Troas was a sea port town in Asia, opposite to Greece.

7. Here it appears to have been the custom of the christians to meet for public worship on the first day of the week, called *the Lord's day*, tho' we have no precept on record for the purpose; and also, that it was their custom to *break bread*, that is to administer the Lord's supper, every Lord's day, and this appears from other accounts of early times. The abuses which have arisen in this institution have been very extraordinary indeed; but it is very easy to distinguish what it was intended to be; and no abuse of it will authorize us to neglect the proper use of it, a neglect which is too common with us. It is the proper external badge of our profession as christians; as the observance of the passover and other peculiar rites, were the badges of Judaism, and if we profess christianity at all, we ought not either to be ashamed or afraid of wearing the external signs of it.

9. The ancients had only openings in the walls of their houses for windows, without any glass in them, and in general they had shutters to keep out the rain,

or the wind, when they were incommoded by them, tho' oiled paper was alſo pretty common. In one of theſe windows, in the higheſt part of the room, this young man was ſitting, the place being probably much crouded. Or Paul *might be* preaching in the court *which* was ſurrounded by the buildings of the houſe, and Eutychus might have placed himſelf in one of the windows of the upper rooms, which were openings even with the floor, generally guarded with lattice work, which might give way as he leaned againſt it.

10. It is poſſible that Paul ſtretched himſelf upon the body of this young man, as Elijah *did* upon that of the child, which he raiſed from the dead. *Or it is* poſſible that, tho' he was ſuppoſed to be dead, he might not have been ſo in reality; nothing that is here ſaid properly implying that a miracle was wrought *in* his recovery, except the circumſtance *of Paul's* delivering him alive to his friends, which would *otherwiſe* hardly have been mentioned.

11. Paul probably continued his diſcourſe to this great length, apprehending, as we find he did with reſpect to the elders of Epheſus, that he ſhould ſee them no more.

We ſee upon this, and all other occaſions, the great earneſtneſs and affectionate diſpoſition of Paul; how much he had the cauſe of chriſtianity, and the good of mankind at heart. It was evidently no part that he was acting for his own purpoſe; and conſidering his education, his early principles, and habits, and his good ſenſe, let unbelievers account for his conduct if they can.

The

The truth is that in general, th
upon a random hafty view of th
ſideration.

16. We now find Paul upon h
third apoſtolical progreſs, on which h
three years at Epheſus, and after that tw
cedonia and Greece. Returning thence,
at Jeruſalem at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, A. D.
not time to call at Epheſus, but from Miletas,
port of Aſia Minor, ſouth of Epheſus, he ſent for the elders of that church, in order to take his leave of them, and give them his laſt inſtructions, apprehending that he ſhould have no other opportunity of doing it.

In this addreſs to them we ſee marks of a perfect conſciouſneſs of the upright and diſintereſted diſcharge of his duty in preaching the goſpel, and the earneſt deſire he had for the welfare of all thoſe to whom he had devoted his ſervices. Such paſſages as theſe can never be read and attended to, without removing all idea of the apoſtles having had any intereſt of their own to ſerve by preaching the goſpel: If they deceived others, they firſt of all deceived themſelves; and how ſo many perſons, men of ſo much good ſenſe in other reſpects, and whoſe property, eaſe, reputation and lives, were as dear to them as the ſame things are to other men, came to be deceived, it will not be eaſy to imagine.

19. Till ſome time after this period, all the oppoſition that the goſpel met with was from the Jews, the Romans having taken no part in it, but generally conſidering chriſtianity as a new ſect among the Jews, whom they had already tolerated in all parts of the empire,

67 ...d allowed to follow their own peculiar cuſtoms. This was a great advantage to chriſtianity in its infant ſtate, and the Romans would alſo be ſenſible that chriſtianity, being perſecuted by the Jews, was no ſcheme of theirs as a nation; and therefore, that if Chriſt was an impoſtor, he had no advantage whatever in the ſcene that he had choſen for it, the government of the country having been ſo extremely hoſtile to him; and this is a valuable argument for the truth of chriſtianity at this day. It had no countenance from worldly power or policy, and therefore could not have gained ground as it did, if it had not been ſupported with the power of truth.

21. It is plain from this, that Paul had at *this time* communicated to the church at Epheſus the whole ſcheme of the goſpel, all that he knew concerning it, without concealing any thing, and here we ſee the ſum and ſubſtance of the whole is comprehended in repentance from ſin, and in faith in Chriſt, by which was meant the belief that Jeſus was a true prophet, who would come again to raiſe the dead and judge the world. You have ſeen likewiſe, in the whole hiſtory of Paul's travels, that all the oppoſition the Jews made to him, was on account of his preaching that Jeſus was the Meſſiah. Now had he preached that, beſides being the Meſſiah, he was likewiſe God, or the maker of the world under God, it is impoſſible but that there would have been ſome mention of it in this hiſtory. If an objection to a doctrine of ſo extraordinary a nature as this had ariſen from no other quarter, it certainly would from the Jews, who would no doubt have been much

much more offended at it than at the doctrine of any particular man being the Meſſiah. And this objection they were ready enough to make to chriſtianity, as ſoon as the idea began to be entertained by chriſtians, and it is to this day the principal objection they make to it. But this did not take place till long after the age of the apoſtles.

22. i. e. I have an impulſe from the ſpirit of God to go to Jeruſalem.

24. Whence could this magnanimity ariſe but from a firm perſuaſion of the unſpeakable value of the goſpel, and a conſciouſneſs of his diſintereſted labours in preaching it. The goſpel is the ſame that ever it was, and as deſerving of our attachment.

27. Happy are thoſe miniſters who can make this ſame declaration.

28. In the beſt manuſcripts it is the *church of the Lord*, that is of Chriſt; and the Syriac verſion has *the church of Chriſt*. God is often ſaid in a figurative way, to redeem or purchaſe, us to himſelf by the death of his ſon; having ſent his ſon to recover men from a ſtate of ſin and wickedneſs; and Chriſt is alſo ſaid to have redeemed us from all iniquity, and to waſh us from our ſins in his blood, becauſe he gave up his life in this undertaking. But that God can give his blood, which our tranſlation implies, is impoſſible; ſo that we cannot but conclude that there muſt have been ſome miſtake or other, even if there had been no manuſcript or antient verſion, in favour of any other reading. But the beſt manuſcripts, and the oldeſt verſions, have a different

ferent expreſſion, and therefore our tranſlation ought to have been different from what it is.

By *his own blood*, Mr. W. underſtands *his own ſon*. W.

The Alexandrian MSS. has *which he redeemed with blood*.

We are no where ſaid to be bought or redeemed from the wrath of God, but only from the power of ſin by God. He is always ready to receive the penitent ſinner, without any other atonement or ſatisfaction made to his juſtice, and we are required to forgive others as God forgives us, that is *freely*, upon the repentance only of an offending brother, without requiring any other ſatisfaction than his repentance. *If he repent*, ſays our Saviour, *thou ſhalt forgive him*.

The word that is here rendered *overſeer*, is the ſame that is elſewhere rendered *biſhop*, which ſhews that at this time, as there were *ſeveral of* them, there was no one perſon to whom the care or government of a chriſtian church was committed, but that, like the Jewiſh ſynagogues, the buſineſs of them was conducted by a number of perſons, called *Elders*, as theſe overſeers, or biſhops, of the church of Epheſus are here called. Afterwards, one of theſe elders had firſt a nominal, and then a real pre-eminence over the reſt, in conſequence he alone had the title of biſhop, while the reſt retained that of elders only. This change from the primitive cuſtom went on till the biſhops of particular churches, or congregations, became what are called dioceſan biſhops, having an extenſive authority, both ſpiritual and temporal, over other churches, and one of

of them, viz. the biſhop of Rome, obtained dominion over the whole chriſtian world.

29. In this he alludes to the hereſy of the Gnoſtics, which appeared pretty early at Epheſus, as it is evident from Paul's firſt epiſtle to Timothy, who reſided there, written a little before this interview with the elders of this church. They taught among other things that the world was not made by God, but by ſome inferior being, and that the chriſtian reſurrection was only a figurative thing, and not real, which was ſubverſive of the proper hope of the goſpel; but I ſhall have a better opportunity of explaining theſe things hereafter.

34. This Paul now did at Corinth, and poſſibly at ſeveral other places, to convince his diſciples that he ſought nothing but their advantage.

35. How contrary is this to the doctrine of the Monks in popiſh countries, who devote themſelves to what they call *contemplation and prayer*, that is, in many caſes to idleneſs, and the vices which always attend idleneſs.

This is a valuable ſaying of our Lord's, exactly ſimilar to others of his in the goſpels, but not found in any of the four.

38. We ſee here the intenſe affection which theſe chriſtians had for their ſpiritual paſtor, who indeed deſerved it ſo well of them. It is happy when diſintereſted ſervices are ſo well rewarded. But this is not their proper reward, or the immediate object of preachers of the goſpel. They are to do their duty in the firſt place, in preaching what Paul here calls *the whole counsel of God*, in whatever manner their ſervices may be

be received by men, looking for their proper reward hereafter, in the *well done good and faithful servants* of their common Lord.

Ch. XXI. 1. Paul is now on his return from his third apoſtolic progreſs, and having taken leave of the elders of *Epheſus*, whom he had deſired to meet him at Miletus, is now haſtening to be at Jeruſalem, at the approaching feaſt of pentecoſt, which was A. D. 58. Thither he was carrying a conſiderable collection of money, which had been contributed by the Gentile chriſtians in Greece for the relief of the poor chriſtians at Jeruſalem.

4. i. e. It was at his peril or he would ſuffer in conſequence of it. It could not be an abſolute order from the holy ſpirit, that he ſhould not go, for he himſelf had ſaid that he was preſſed in the ſpirit to go, which implies that he went in conſequence of a motion of the holy ſpirit for that purpoſe.

7. This was a conſiderable city on the coaſt of Phœnicia, and it was ſo called by one of the Ptolemys of Egypt, who had the poſſeſſion of it, and who had fortified and ornamented it.

8. Philip, was one of the ſeven extraordinary officers, appointed by the apoſtles to act under them, both in temporal and ſpiritual affairs. Stephen, the firſt martyr, had been one of them, and this Philip was the next in order. He had preached the goſpel to the Samaritans, then to the eunuch of Candice, queen of Ethiopia, after which we have an account of his proceedings to Cæſarea, where he probably ſettled and where Paul, now finds him.

10 This

10. This is the Agabus who had foretold the approaching famine in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, of which we had an account before, Acts xi, 28.

11. Not that he would be bound in that particular manner, but that he would be as certainly bound, and be kept in custody, which was actually the case.

13. He knew it was the will of God that he should go thither at that time, and his own personal safety was only a secondary object with him. If we be christians we also should make our own advantage, ease, pleasure, or safety, a secondary object, and a faithful discharge of our duty the first, whatever difficulty or hazardous services it should call us to.

16. This was probably one of the disciples of our Lord himself, before the ministry of the apostles.

17. Both on account of the safe return of such laborious and successful preachers of the gospel, and also on account of the collection which they brought from the Gentile christians, which was peculiarly acceptable to the poor christians at Jerusalem.

18. It is probable that James, called the brother of our Lord, and the author of the epistle which bears his name, was the only apostle who was now at Jerusalem. As Peter addresses his epistles to the Jewish christians in Asia, Pontus, and Bythinia, it is probable that he might at this time be in these parts.

20. It is not to be wondered at, that the Jewish christians always continued attached to their law, which they knew to be of divine origin, and which our Lord said he came not to destroy, but to fulfil, which did not necessarily imply that after it was fulfilled it was

to

to be abolished, as of no farther use. Besides there are many parts of the Jewish law which could not, except by a very harsh construction, be said to be fulfilled by Christ at all, especially the rites of circumcision and sacrifice. For if we consider the origin and use of them, we shall not find, that they had no reference to Christ or christianity. Christ was circumcised as other Jews were, but there is not the least intimation that this rite was to end with him. The apostles had certainly no such idea, for they directed the practice of it afterwards, and it is only in a figurative sense that the death of Christ is ever called a sacrifice. It was no proper antitype of the sacrifices under the law; or should any apostle have imagined that this had been the case, and thence have concluded that the business of sacrificing ought to be discontinued (tho' there is no intimation of any such thing in the New Testament) this would be no proper authority for their discontinuance. An express revelation would have been necessary for the abrogation of whatever had been appointed by revelation. It is remarkable that, in the prophecies of Ezekiel, which certainly refer to the time of the final restoration of the Jews to their own country, mention is made both of a temple, and of sacrifices.

21. This was a false charge, for it does not appear that Paul himself had ever neglected any part of the Jewish ritual, or taught other Jews to neglect it, but that he had only strenuously insisted that the Gentile converts were not bound to these observances. He had indeed eaten in company with Gentiles, as Peter had done; but it does not follow that he had eaten any thing

thing of which it was unlawful for a Jew to eat. He had only broken through a reſtraint which *tradition* and not the *law of Moſes* had enjoined.

24. It appears to have been conſidered as an act of piety to aſſiſt Nazarites, or perſons who had vows upon them, and who in conſequence of it, were obliged to be at conſiderable expence at the expiration of their vows, their friends aſſiſting them in defraying that expence, and joining in their devotions. This act of piety and charity Paul took upon himſelf, in order to ſhew his attachment to the law.

25. In this the chriſtians at Jeruſalem expreſſed their intire concurrence in all that Paul had done.

26. The offering for each Nazarite was two lambs and one ram, beſides flour and oil, which was a conſiderable expence.

27. Seven days were to complete this buſineſs. It was at the very beginning of theſe ſeven days, and long before the end of them, that this tumult happened.

28. This was altogether a falſe charge. Paul had not taught any thing either againſt the law, or the temple, except what all chriſtians might be ſaid to have done, and he had brought no Greeks into the temple.

30. This was with an intention, no doubt, to beat or ſtone him to death, which in their ungoverned zeal and rage, they were ready to do, without any proceſs or form of law.

31. This was the Roman officer whoſe ſtation was in the caſtle of Antonia, near the temple, in order to prevent tumults, to which the Jews were very liable.

33. i. e.

33. i. e. He had two ſoldiers to guard him, each having faſtened with a chain to one of his hands.

38. This was one of the impoſtors, who, according to our Saviour's predictions, preceded the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. This Egyptian (*that is a Jew of Egypt*) whoſe name is not come down to us, called himſelf a prophet; and having collected a number of followers, brought them to the mount of Olives, near Jeruſalem, promiſing them that the walls would fall down before them; but Felix, the Roman governor, marching againſt him, the Egyptian was defeated, and his followers either ſlain or diſperſed, but himſelf eſcaped. The people having been deceived by him, *it is no wonder* that he was unpopular, and that Lyſias ſuſpected Paul might be the ſame perſon.

39. The people of Tarſus boaſted of their antiquity: The city derived its name, as ſome ſuppoſe, from Tarſiſh, the ſon of Javan. They were no leſs diſtinguiſhed by their application to learning, than by their wealth.

Ch. XXII. 1. Paul being now arrived at Jeruſalem, from his third apoſtolical progreſs, and being narrowly watched, as he always was, by his enemies the unbelieving Jews, was apprehended by them in the temple, on ſuſpicion of his having brought Gentiles into it; and a violent clamour being immediately raiſed, and he being accuſed to the populace of having preached every where againſt the religion of his country, was upon the point of being ſtoned to death, or of being torn to pieces, when he was reſcued from their violence by Lyſias, the Roman officer who had the command of the guard near the temple. Paul, wiſhing to give the people

ple who were aſſembled on this occaſion, ſome ſatisfaction with reſpect to his conduct, obtained leave of the officer to ſpeak to them, which he did as follows.

2. This circumſtance would ſatisfy the multitude that he was a Jew, their countryman, and diſpoſe them to give him the more attention.

3. Gamaliel has been mentioned before, as a perſon in the higheſt credit with the Phariſaical Jews. A diſciple of his could not be ſuppoſed to want either a knowledge of their religion, or a zeal for it.

5. The high-prieſt, and many of the elders of the Jews, under whom Paul had acted, were probably then living, and could bear witneſs to the truth of this part of his narrative, and this being found true, would give the more credit to the remainder. His zeal for his religion, and his rage againſt chriſtianity, being ſo well known, it would be evident that nothing but ſome very remarkable event, ſome very overbearing evidence of the truth of chriſtianity, could ſupply a ſufficient motive for ſuch a change of his conduct. It would therefore prepare them for the hearing of what follows.

9. They heard, as may be collected from another account of the ſame tranſaction, a confuſed ſound of a perſon ſpeaking, but could not diſtinguiſh the words, or the purport of what was ſaid.

16. This may probably be interpreted, agreeably to other ſimilar expreſſions, *taking upon him the chriſtian profeſſion.* For *calling upon this name* ſeems to have been equivalent to *being called by this name.* A ſimilar expreſſion occurs in Geneſis Ch. iv, v. 26. *then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,* or to *be called*

by the name of the Lord, diſtinguiſhing themſelves as his worſhippers, in oppoſition to thoſe who probably about that time began to worſhip other gods.

17. This viſion was probably after his return from Antioch, and immediately before his miſſion to the idolatrous Gentiles. For it is not probable that the firſt intimation of the calling of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of chriſtianity was made to Paul, previous to Peter's being ſo particularly illuminated with reſpect to it.

19. By this he intimated that he was exceedingly deſirous of continuing at Jeruſalem, for the benefit of his countrymen, which he might think would recommend him to his audience. He urged theſe circumſtances of himſelf, and his zeal for the law being ſo well known, as what would give peculiar weight to his teſtimony in favour of chriſtianity.

21. Our Saviour knew that the averſion which the unbelieving Jews would have for him as an apoſtate would be ſo great that their diſappointment in him would weigh more againſt him, than the hiſtory of his converſion would for him.

22. We ſee, upon this and upon many other occaſions, how highly the Jews thought of the privileges of their nation. They were zealous to make converts, and conſidered all men as outcaſts of God who were not circumciſed, and did not conform to their law, and it is plain they underſtood Paul as ſpeaking here of his preaching the goſpel to Gentiles, without the obligation of circumciſion and a conformity to the law. His preaching upon any other plan was no new thing to them,

them, and could not have given ſo much offence. Preaching to the uncircumciſed Gentiles, we have ſeen, gave the greateſt offence to the Jews at a diſtance, and much more to thoſe at Jeruſalem.

23. They threw duſt into the air, to expreſs their rage and abhorrence of him, and they put off their clothes in order to be ready to ſtone him.

24. i. e. Be put to the torture, in order to make him confeſs what he had been guilty of. This was done by the Romans by tying a perſon to a pillar, and ſcourging him with thongs, nearly in the ſame manner as ſoldiers are whipped with us, which is a cruel mode of puniſhment.

25. By the Roman laws no citizen of Rome could either be ſcourged or put to death. He could only be baniſhed.

28. The privileges of a Roman citizen were of great value, and it is known that in the time of Claudius, who preceded Nero, who was now emperor, it was ſometimes purchaſed at a great price. It is moſt probable that Paul's father had either purchaſed his freedom, or obtained it as a reward for ſervices done the ſtate, ſo that his children were born free.

Ch. XXIII. We have ſeen how Paul was reſcued from the violence of the mob at the temple, by Lyſias the Roman officer, the vindication that he made of himſelf in his ſpeech to them, and the rage which they expreſſed when he came to ſpeak of his miſſion to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles. We have alſo ſeen how he was going to be put to the torture, probably in order to make him confeſs his crime and his accomplices, and

how he ſaved himſelf by pleading the privileges of a Roman citizen. He continued however, in the cuſtody of two Roman ſoldiers, who, according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, were chained one to each of his hands.

This Roman governor, who appears to have acted with great ſpirit and propriety in the whole affair, finding that the Jews had nothing to charge him with of a proper civil nature, of which alone he had cognizance, but that it was ſomething relating to their peculiar laws and cuſtoms, ordered an aſſembly of the Sanhedrim, or the great council of the nation to examine into it, he being ready to execute their ſentence if he had approved of it.

1. This was probably in order to obſerve whether he knew any of them, as he had formerly (viz. A. D. 33—35) been perſonally known to all the rulers of the Jews; having at that time entered into all their meaſures, and acted under their authority.

By comparing the accounts which Paul gives of his conduct in different parts of his writings, we find that by this expreſſion he did not mean to acquit himſelf wholly in the ſight of God; for tho' he had acted according to his conſcience while he perſecuted the chriſtians, it was an erroneous and ill informed conſcience, and that he ought to have taken more pains to inform himſelf better.

2. This Ananias was a Sadducee, and had been ſent priſoner to Rome to give an account of his conduct before Claudius Cæſar; in the quarrel between the Jews and the Samaritans; and it is thought that he was acquitted at the interceſſion of Agrippa the younger.

There

There appears to have been no ſufficient reaſon for this order to ſmite Paul, except he might think it was a ſecret reproach to himſelf, and a reflection upon his judges and the court. There is nothing arrogant or improper in any perſon accuſed of a crime to profeſs his innocence.

3. This it is probable Paul ſpake from a prophetic impulſe, as this man was actually killed in the ſiege at Jeruſalem; but conſidering the groſs inſult and indecency of his conduct as a judge, there was very little to be condemned in the apoſtles conduct. Any man of ſpirit, and of a warm temper, would naturally have done the ſame thing.

5. i. e. Irritated as he was by the inſult that had been offered him, he did not conſider that it was the high-prieſt. For it is hardly poſſible but that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, he muſt have known who it was that preſided in a court, with the forms of which he was ſo well acquainted. This ready and reſpectful quoting of the ſcriptures would tend to procure him a more favourable hearing.

6. This was certainly a piece of addreſs in the apoſtle; but I cannot think it to have been perfectly fair, becauſe the reſurrection for which he contended, viz. that of Chriſt, was no more believed by the Phariſees than the Sadducees. The reſurrection of Chriſt is indeed the moſt ſatisfactory evidence of a general reſurrection, and we chriſtians muſt ſay that if Chriſt be not raiſed, our hope of reſurrection is vain. But the Phariſees believed the doctrine in general on other grounds. However the Phariſees would have leſs difficulty in admitting

mitting the reſurrection of Chriſt, as they expected a general reſurrection.

7. i. e. Of the audience, who would intereſt themſelves in what was paſſing.

8. The Sadducees allowed the exiſtence of no intelligent being, beſides God and men. Spirits do not in this place mean ſpirits, or ſouls of men; for it is afterwards ſuppoſed that a ſpirit might have ſpoken to Paul, ſo that they muſt have meant ſome inviſible being, the meſſenger of God to men, a kind of apparition, or ſomething at leaſt ſimilar to an angel. And we are led to this interpretation by all the articles being comprehended under two; it being ſaid that the Phariſees confeſſed *both*, that is both the reſurrection, and the doctrine of angels, or ſpirits.

9. We may judge of the violence with which things were conducted at this time, agreeably to the accounts of Joſephus, by the diſorderly proceeding of this aſſembly, the moſt reſpectable in the country.

11. i. e. The Lord Jeſus.

13. At this time, according to the account of Joſephus, the whole country was infeſted with a deſperate ſet of people called *Zealots*, and likewiſe *Sicarii*, who out of a zeal for the law of Moſes made no ſcruple of murdering any perſons who were obnoxious to them. They carried ſhort daggers under their cloaks, and in this manner diſpatched great numbers, by mixing in crouds, eſpecially at the public feſtivals, and even in the temple. They were often employed by perſons of high rank to rid themſelves of their particular enemies. We ſhall ſee that this deſign upon the life of Paul was approved

approved by the members of the Sanhedrim, who had no other method of having their revenge upon him.

16. Paul's original connections having been with the leading men of his country, and his relations probably not being all converted to chriſtianity, retained the ſame connections, which they now employed to ſerve him.

28. Tho' Paul was aſſured by our Saviour that he was to appear at Rome, and therefore this plot againſt his life could not take place at Jeruſalem, yet he did not neglect the natural means of preſerving his life. For God works by natural cauſes.

The Roman officer, it will appear, acted with great prudence and propriety in diſappointing the wicked deſigns of theſe Jews.

Ch. XXIV. We have ſeen Paul reſcued from the violence of the Jews by the commanding officer at the temple, and ſafely conveyed from Jeruſalem to Cæſarea, where Felix the Roman governor reſided, that he might be examined by him in the preſence of his accuſers. At this time the Jews had no power of criminal juriſdiction, ſo as to paſs ſentence of death, and it was nothing leſs than this, that the enemies of Paul intended at this time.

1. We ſee of what importance the Jews imagined this cauſe to be, by the high-prieſt himſelf in perſon, attending the Roman governor as the accuſer of Paul. He might attend indeed, in order to give evidence with reſpect to what had paſſed when he was examined before him. But as a witneſs, any other perſon preſent would have been ſufficient.

2. This oration of Tertullus, probably a pleader by profeſſion, after a complimentary introduction, contains three charges againſt Paul, the firſt that he was a ſeditious perſon, the ſecond that he was a ſectary, and the third that he had profaned the temple. To each of theſe charges Paul *replies*.

The quietneſs here ſpoken of refers to Felix having cleared the country of the bands of robbers with which it was infeſted. But the change was not in fact for the better; for theſe banditti, being driven from their haunts in the mountains, infeſted the cities, and eſpecially Jeruſalem, and uſing a pretext of *religion*, affected a great zeal for the law, and the *privileges of the* Jews as a free nation, held in unlawful ſubjection *by* the Romans, they committed the greateſt outrages, not ſparing any perſons who were obnoxious to them. Felix himſelf was guilty of ſo much oppreſſion, *that the* Jews, who accuſed him before the emperor, would have procured his baniſhment, if he had not *been ſaved* by his brother Pallas. Among other enormities, he procured the high-prieſt Jonathan, who had been his particular friend, to be aſſaſſinated. Tacitus ſays of this Felix, that he practiſed all cruelty and luſt in his government, thinking that he might do all wickedneſs without puniſhment.

5. The charge of faction and ſedition has never failed to be alledged againſt all who endeavour to make men wiſer than their anceſtors. Every *innovation*, as ſuch, is apt to give alarm to perſons whoſe wiſh and intereſt it is to keep all things in the ſame quiet ſtate in which they found them, dreading the effect of all changes,

changes, as not knowing how far they may proceed. But this is an inconvenience that muſt always be riſqued for the ſake of truth. In fact, all the evil and diſturbance has been occaſioned by thoſe who have oppoſed innovation.

Paul was accuſed as one of thoſe who turned the world upſide down; ſo were Luther, Calvin, and Socinus. But theſe ſimply endeavoured to enlighten the minds of men, which would have been followed by no diſturbance at all, if their enemies had not had recourſe to violence in order to ſuppreſs them. They have been the *perſecutors*, and not the *perſecuted*, who have turned the world upſide down, and have occaſioned all the miſchiefs that have been complained of.

The Jewiſh chriſtians were always called *Nazarenes* by the other Jews in their own country, and theſe who were original believers in Jeſus, were always afterwards diſtinguiſhed by their zeal for the law, in conjunction with their belief of chriſtianity, and likewiſe by their holding that Chriſt was ſimply a man. No inſtance can be produced of any Nazarenes, or Jewiſh chriſtians, holding any other doctrine, which they certainly would have done, if it had been taught by the apoſtles.

6. He conceals the circumſtance of their intending to kill Paul without any proceſs of law, before Lyſias reſcued him.

9. The orator having completed his accuſation, it was aſſented to by the Jews who were preſent. But it will appear that they were far from being able to produce any proper evidence for any part of it.

10 This

10. This was A. D. 58, when Felix had been governor of Judea ſix or ſeven years.

11. There was therefore no *time* for him to have made any alarming ſedition, which would have required accomplices, and leiſure to conſult their meaſures.

13. To this general charge, Paul *aledges facts well* known to his enemies themſelves, and which amount to a full juſtification of his conduct; and he challenges them to prove any of the things which they laid to his charge. But it appears that they were not provided for any thing of the kind.

15. To the charge of his being a Nazarene, he pleads guilty, but aſſerts that this was nothing contrary to the law of the Jews, which the Romans would have *reſpected*. He was a worſhipper of the ſame God with the other Jews, and held the ſame great doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead.

16. He not only held the true faith, but endeavoured to conform his life to it.

17. So far was he from being an enemy to the Jews, or to their religion, that he had come to Jeruſalem with the beſt intentions reſpecting both.

21. Of this he knew that none of the Phariſees would complain, and the Sadducees would not have been regarded.

22. As Felix perceived that the Jews could not ſupport their charges of ſedition and profanation of the temple, and nothing remained of the accuſation but that of Paul being a chriſtian, of which he had but little knowledge, he required more time to inquire into its nature and tendency, and alſo to inform himself more particularly

particularly concerning the conduct of Paul, as far as the Roman officer had been witneſs to it.

23. Thus far this unjuſt governor having no intereſt to miſlead him, acted uprightly; Paul having every liberty that was conſiſtent with his being a priſoner, amenable to juſtice.

24. This Druſilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, and ſiſter of the younger Agrippa, of whom we ſhall have an account hereafter. She had been married to Aziſus king of Emiſa, who had been circumciſed, and embraced the Jewiſh religion as the condition of that marriage. Being remarkably beautiful, Felix had ſeduced her from her huſband, and engaged her to marry him.

25. Paul, no doubt, gave a particular account of the principles and the evidences of chriſtianity, as well as this great object of it, viz. the reformation of men's lives with a view to a future judgment; but it was theſe parts of Paul's diſcourſe which the guilt of Felix could not fail to apply to himſelf, that he was particularly affected with.

We have no account of the effect of this diſcourſe on Druſilla, tho' out of curioſity ſhe was preſent. The doctrine which alarmed Felix was not new to her; and being a Jewefs ſhe might flatter herſelf with a hope of eſcaping the judgments of God, as being a daughter of Abraham, a circumſtance on which the Jews of that age built very much.

25. It was probably to hide his confuſion that Felix diſmiſſed Paul at this time.

26 Of

25. Of the innocence of Paul, Felix ſeems to have had no doubt; but avarice had more influence over him than a regard to juſtice. He might think that Paul, having brought money to Jeruſalem, and being a diſtinguiſhed member of a liberal ſect, ſome of the money would have been employed, as money too often was employed in thoſe times, to bribe his judge.

27. This, however, did not avail him, as the Jews followed him with their accuſations to Rome, where nothing but the intereſt of his brother with Nero ſaved him.

Ch. XXV. 1. We have ſeen the whole conduct of Felix the Roman governor of Judea to the apoſtle Paul, who had been reſcued from the hands of the Jews, and had been two years a priſoner at Cæſarea. It was during this impriſonment that a violent quarrel happened between the Jews in that city and the *Gentiles*, about the *privileges of the city*; a quarrel in which many lives were loſt, and which inflamed the animoſity of both parties, till, from a concurrence of other cauſes, the Jews broke out into open rebellion againſt the Romans about ſix years from this time, for we are now conſidering the events of the year ſixty or ſixty one.

13. This Agrippa is commonly called *the younger*, being the ſon of the elder Agrippa, who had put James to death, and impriſoned the apoſtle Peter, and who died in the manner that has been ſeen. This Agrippa, being only ſeventeen years old when his father died, the country of Judea was reduced to the form of a Roman province, but he gradually obtained the kingdom of Chalcis, the tetrarchies of Philip and Lyſanias, with ſome towns

towns in Galilea, beſides this, he had the ordering of every thing relating to the temple, and the appointment of the high-prieſt. It was to the territories of this prince that the chriſtians retired on the breaking out of the Jewiſh war.

Bernice was ſiſter to this Agrippa, and ſuſpected of an inceſtuous commerce with him. She had been married to her uncle the king of Chalcis, and upon his death to Polemon king of Cilicia, who had embraced the Jewiſh religion in order to obtain her, and yet ſhe had now abandoned him. Afterwards Titus the Roman emperor was violently in love with her, and would even have married her if the people of Rome would have borne it.

19. The word *ſuperſtition* is not here uſed in an offenſive ſenſe, but only to denote religion in general, for Feſtus could not be ſuppoſed to intend an affront to his gueſt, who was a Jew, and who had paid him a viſit out of reſpect.

25. The whole proceeding of Feſtus ſeems to have been fair and impartial; and yet as Paul was left in his cuſtody, and at his diſpoſal, there ſeems to have been no reaſon why a man of whoſe innocence he was perſuaded, ſhould not have been ſet at liberty. It appears, however, that Paul's own appeal to Cæſar prevented this, and this he had done on ſeeing that he had no other way of eſcaping the violence of his enemies.

Ch. XXVI. 1. In this chapter we have an account of the diſcourſe of Paul before Feſtus the Roman governor, in the preſence of Agrippa king of a conſiderable part of the country of the Jews, and of his ſiſter Bernice

Bernice. The deſign of it was to give Agrippa an opportunity of hearing Paul, and to enable Feſtus to give ſome tolerable account of his priſoner to the Roman emperor, to whom in conſequence of Paul's appeal, he was obliged to ſend him. Feſtus being ignorant of the Jewiſh religion and cuſtoms, with which the king was of courſe well acquainted, might learn from him to form a better judgment in the caſe.

3. The king was not only acquainted with the Jewiſh religion, but likewiſe had no particular prejudice againſt Paul.

5. His mode of religion was the moſt reſpectable among the common people of the Jews; *the Sadducees* being only a few of the richer ſort, who were regarded as free thinkers, and libertines, by the nation in general.

8. The high-prieſt, who was at that time Ananias, the ſon of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, being a Sadducee, and alſo perhaps the chief of the Sanhedrim, Paul might imagine, or might know, that it was his adherence to the doctrine of the reſurrection, which he held in common with the Phariſees, that might contribute to heighten this animoſity againſt him. A Phariſee, like Gamaliel might think the chriſtian doctrine of the reſurrection of Chriſt a poſſible thing, being conſonant to their general belief and expectations; but it overturned the whole ſyſtem of the Sadducees.

11. All this Paul urged as an argument of his integrity and zeal, for whatever he apprehended to be right; and having been firſt exerted againſt chriſtianity,

ty, which his enemies could not deny, would tend to conciliate their good will towards him.

14. On theſe circumſtances of the converſion of Paul I have remarked before, when I ſhewed how far they all are from being favourable to any deception, either with reſpect to Paul, or others. He was then in the height of his zeal againſt chriſtianity, his companions all of the ſame character, the viſion at noon day, in their preſence, and his conduct afterwards was of the ſame caſt as before; ſhewing the ſame ardent undaunted mind, acting with the ſame ſpirit, in cauſe which he thought to be right.

17. It is not probable that Paul underſtood the full extent of his commiſſion at this time, ſince it was ſeveral years before Peter was inſtructed to preach to Cornelius, who was the firſt convert from the proper Gentiles. He probably imagined that he ſhould be the inſtrument of converting the Gentiles after they were firſt made proſelytes to Judaiſm.

18. This is a conciſe view of the great benefits of the goſpel. It is to enlighten men's minds with reſpect to their knowledge of God, and a future ſtate, to turn them from vice to virtue, that, being true penitents, they might be received into the favour of God, and made happy hereafter. What is all other knowledge compared to this, and this is what all who believe chriſtianity are poſſeſſed of?

21. The expreſſion implies that they were ready in a tumultuous manner to tear him in pieces, without any form of law.

23. He

23. He aſcribes it to the interpoſition of providence by means of the Roman governor, that he was reſcued from their hands, and permitted to enjoy a good deal of liberty, which he no doubt made uſe of in preaching the goſpel to all perſons that came in *his* way; and *this* goſpel, he here ſays, was nothing contrary to the religion of Moſes.

24. It is no wonder that Feſtus, who knew nothing of Judaiſm or chriſtianity, but, with the learned of his age, conſidered the former, and of courſe the latter, as a branch of it, as an abſurd ſuperſtition, not worthy of his notice, ſhould imagine that a man who could make ſo ſerious a buſineſs of it as Paul did, muſt have *his* head turned; and to put the ſofteſt conſtruction upon it, he ſaid it was the effect of his deep learning or ſtudy.

26. Agrippa, he knew, could not but regard the whole buſineſs in a light very different from that in which Feſtus conſidered it. With him the religion of the Jews, and every thing that related to it, was a ſerious thing, and Paul boldly appeals to him as not unacquainted with the tranſactions of his own times, in which the miracles wrought by Chriſt and the apoſtles were peculiarly conſpicuous. It is remarkable that Peter ſpeaking before the Jewiſh multitude on the day of Pentecoſt, alſo before the high-prieſt and the Sanhedrim preſently after, and Paul before this tribunal, do not appeal to any particular miracle, or propoſe the examination of any evidence. This they knew was ſuperfluous, the miracles having been ſo numerous, that no perſon living in the country entertained any doubt of them. They only aſcribed them to a wrong cauſe,

or

or without conſidering their cauſe, rejected them becauſe they concluded that nothing contrary to the law of Moſes, which they haſtily imagined chriſtianity to be, could be true.

28. The king was evidently ſtaggared with this defence of chriſtianity, and was unable to reply to it; and therefore made this frank confeſſion of the ſtate of his mind with reſpect to it.

29. There is great preſence of mind, propriety, and politeneſs in this anſwer of Paul, which might ſatisfy Feſtus, that he was not a man who was beſide himſelf.

32. Whatever they thought of Paul's doctrine, it is evident they were convinced of his innocence with reſpect to the accuſation of the Jews. The king, however, never became a chriſtian, at leaſt he never made open profeſſion of chriſtianity, whatever he might think of it in his own mind; and that he did not think unfavourably of it, may be preſumed from this circumſtance, that upon the breaking out of the Jewiſh war, which was within a few years of this time, all the chriſtians, forewarned by the prophecy of our Saviour, fled from the neighbourhood of Jeruſalem, and took refuge in the territories of this prince, where they remained unmoleſted, this prince, who had no quarrel with the Romans, favouring them. It is not impoſſible but that the favour he ſhewed them might in a great meaſure be owing to his hearing this diſcourſe of Paul. Alſo when James the leſs, or the brother of our Lord, was put to death by one of the high-prieſts, which diſpleaſed the common people of the Jews, by whom he was much eſteemed, he removed him from the high prieſthood,

and put another in his place. After the deſtruction of Jeruſalem it is probable that he ended his days at Rome, where it is known that his ſiſter reſided. He was the laſt king of any part of Judea.

Ch. XXVII. 1. The apoſtle Paul having been *two* years a priſoner at Cæſarea, under the governments of Felix and Feſtus, and having appealed, as every freeman of Rome had a right to do, to the hearing of the emperor, was accordingly committed to the care of a Roman centurion, along with other priſoners, who were to be ſent by ſea to Rome. In this chapter we have an account of this voyage, and it is ſo circumſtantially related, and all the particulars ſo exactly correſpond to the known hiſtory, geography, and cuſtoms, of thoſe times, that if any narrative can be it's own voucher, this is ſo. This, indeed, is the caſe with the whole of the evangelical hiſtory, but more eſpecially with this book of Acts, ſo that to an unprejudiced attentive reader, ſufficiently converſant in the hiſtory of thoſe times, it muſt appear impoſſible to have been written in any later time, and being immediately publiſhed, and univerſally received, as an authentic hiſtory, by thoſe who were the beſt judges of its authenticity, it is now intitled to as full credit as any hiſtory whatever. And if the book of Acts contains a faithful credible account of the promulgation of chriſtianity, the truth of it cannot be doubted.

2. Perhaps this ſhip was not intended to take them directly to Rome; and as in thoſe days they ſeldom ſailed far from the coaſt, and frequently came to land, they might expect to find a ſhip in ſome other port that was

was going directly to Rome. Adramitium was a ſea port in the upper part of the Ægean ſea, quite out of the way to Rome, but tho' the ſhip belonged to that place, it might be on a voyage in which both Paleſtine and Rome were included.

This Ariſtarchus was of Theſſalonica in Macedonia, and had accompanied Paul in his laſt journey to Jeruſalem, carrying the contribution of the Gentile converts of that place to the poor chriſtians in Judea. He was with Paul at Epheſus, when he was in danger from a tumult there, and he is mentioned in Paul's letters from Rome as a fellow priſoner, perhaps on account of his cloſe and voluntary attendance upon Paul. We find alſo that in this voyage Paul was accompanied by Luke, the writer of this book, from his uſing the plural number in the whole narrative. Indeed, no other than a paſſenger in the ſhip could have deſcribed the voyage ſo particularly as it is here done.

4. It appears, that inſtead of launching into the Mediterranean ſea, they kept very near the coaſt, to take the opportunity of getting into an harbour in caſe of a ſtorm. Now that navigation is better underſtood, the open ſea is deemed much ſafer than near the coaſt, in ſuch a caſe.

5. This is the ſecond ſea port they touched at, and here they find a ſhip which was bound from Alexandria to Rome, which does not appear to have had any buſineſs in this place.

8. This was in the iſland of Crete, where, from Paul's epiſtles, it appears that ſome time or other he had preached the goſpel, and fixed Titus there, as he

had done Timothy at Epheſus. When this was, is uncertain, but there was no opportunity of his doing any thing of the kind at this time.

9. The *faſt* here ſpoken of was the only one obſerved by the Jews. It was the day of *atonement*, which fell about the twenty fifth of our September, and this was ſo near winter that it was reckoned dangerous to be at ſea, while navigation was ſo little underſtood.

10. There is nothing in this opinion but what might have been given by Paul without any particular revelation, but as he had a revelation concerning the event of this voyage, it is not impoſſible but that he might have ſome ſupernatural illumination of this kind in an earlier period of it.

14. This was probably ſuch a wind as in the ſame ſeas, is now called a *Levanter*, being a kind of hurricane, blowing in ſeveral directions in a ſhort time.

16. This was to ſecure the boat from being ſtaved and deſtroyed.

17. This was getting the ropes quite round the veſſel, to prevent it from burſting aſunder, a thing that was not unuſual in the ancient mode of navigation.

The quickſands here mentioned were probably thoſe remarkable ones near the coaſt of Africa, ſo that they had been driven too much to the South.

24. i. e. The lives of all who were in the ſame ſhip.

26. This muſt neceſſarily have been ſaid by the ſpirit of prophecy.

27. i. e. The part of the Mediterranean ſea which is to the weſt of Sicily and Italy, from which the Gulph of

of Venice was then called the *Adriatic Gulph*, or a Gulph from the Adriatic ſea.

31. Tho' Paul knew that their lives would be preſerved, he likewiſe knew that God, in order to effect this, would make uſe of natural means, and there does not appear to have been any miracle either in the ſhipwreck, or the eſcape from it, only the event was ſuch as no man only of himſelf could certainly have foretold.

33. i. e. They had taken no regular meal.

39. The word here rendered *ſhore* ſometimes ſignifies a *ſandy ſhore*, proper for the anchorage of ſhips. In ſome ſenſe every creek of the ſea muſt have a ſhore, as well as the ſea itſelf. That this place was ſandy appears from v. 41, where we find that the ſhip ſtuck faſt in it.

40. They looſened the rudder, probably to make the beſt uſe of it they could in reaching the land.

41. i. e. Two currents.

43. Tho' the Centurion, with great juſtice as well as humanity, would not ſuffer the priſoners to be put to death, he ordered them to make the firſt attempt to land, with a view, no doubt, that the reſt of the ſhip's company might form a better judgment in what manner they ſhould make the attempt themſelves. Accordingly, the priſoners who could ſwim had no other advantage, while the reſt took boards, and broken pieces of the ſhip.

Ch. XXVIII. In the laſt chapter we had an account of the voyage in which the apoſtle Paul was ſent a priſoner from Judea to Rome, which terminated in a ſhip wreck, tho' without the loſs of any life, agreeably to

what was predicted by Paul, after a vision in which he had that information.

1. This island is now called *Malta*, in the Mediterranean, tho' there are some who think that it was the island of Melita, in the Adriatic gulph, or gulph of Venice.

2. The Greeks called all people besides themselves *Barbarians*, including all those who spoke any language different from their own. The people here mentioned are said to have been a colony of Phenicians, who spoke a language similar to the Hebrew. If humanity be a test of civilization, these people were far from being *barbarians* in the usual acceptation of the word. There are many places, it is to be feared, on the sea coast of other countries, nominally christian, in which persons escaping from shipwreck would not have been treated with so much kindness. The benefit *which the* inhabitants of the sea coast are allowed to receive from the wreck is too great a temptation to them to endeavour to make it one, by destroying those who may have survived such a calamity.

4. There are few persons so barbarous but they have some notion of a Supreme Being, and an overruling providence. But all mankind are too apt to consider immediate good as a token of divine approbation, an opinion which is finely refuted in the book of Job, and which was also properly checked by our Saviour with respect to the Galileans killed by Pilate, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell. The present life is only a state of probation, which necessarily requires that

good

good and evil be diſtributed in a promiſcuous manner, for the proper trial of all.

5. That our Saviour's diſciples ſhould take up ſerpents unhurt, was one of the particulars mentioned by him in his laſt addreſs to the apoſtles before his aſcenſion. Mark xvi, 18. Luke x, 19.

6. This ſudden tranſition from thinking very ill of the apoſtle, to thinking ſo highly of him was quite natural. They juſtly concluded that there was ſomething ſupernatural in the caſe, and the heathens of that age had a notion that their gods frequently deſcended upon earth in the form of men. Thus the inhabitants of Lyſtra took Paul and Barnabas to be two of their gods, after the cure of the lame man at the gate of their city.

10. Theſe benevolent miracles could not fail to give the captain, and the whole ſhip's company, as well as the inhabitants of the iſland, a favourable impreſſion of chriſtianity, and of Paul in particular; and this might probably contribute to his favourable treatment at Rome when he arrived there.

11. Caſtor and Pollux were ſuppoſed to be the ſons of Jupiter, the chief of the heathen gods. They were particularly invoked in caſe of ſtorms. The Greeks and Romans fixed the ſigns, or images, of their gods, both at the heads and ſterns of their ſhips.

12. Syracuſe was the moſt conſiderable city in Sicily, and had been one of the moſt conſiderable cities in the world.

13. Rhegium is a city in Italy now called Rhegio, almoſt entirely deſtroyed in the late earthquake.

14. Puteoli is a town not far from Naples. Being at that time a conſiderable place, it is not extraordinary that chriſtians ſhould be found there. From this place Paul and his company ſeem to have proceeded by land.

15. Appii Forum is about fifty miles from Rome, and the Three Taverns about thirty from it. It muſt have been a great conſolation to this apoſtle in his bonds, to have this mark of reſpect ſhewn him by the chriſtians in Rome, to whom he had written his long epiſtle about three years before this time.

16. It appears from other evidence that the prefect of the pretorian guard was the perſon to whom priſoners ſent from the provinces were delivered. And it is remarkable that at this particular time, viz. about the year ſixty one after Chriſt, there was only one perſon in this office, and this was the famous *Burchus Afranius* a great favourite with Nero, who was *then emperor*; whereas both before and after this time, there were two perſons in this office, which is a ſtriking circumſtance in favour of the credibility of this hiſtory.

The ſoldier who kept Paul was, no doubt, chained to him, one end of the chain being faſtened to Paul's right hand, and the other to the ſoldiers left, according to the cuſtom of thoſe times.

17. Notwithſtanding Paul's innocence, and the favourable teſtimony of the Roman governor Feſtus, and alſo of Julius the centurion, who conducted him to Rome, he was not acquitted when he came to the hearing of the emperor, but was ordered to continue a priſoner, tho' under eaſy confinement, for two years, living in his own hired houſe, under the cuſtody of a ſoldier

ſoldier who was chained to him. At his hearing before the emperor, it appears by his epiſtles from Rome, that all his chriſtian friends, tho' they had ſhewn him ſo much affection as to have gone thirty, and ſome of them fifty miles to meet him, now deſerted him: But notwithſtanding this, he ſaid *the Lord ſtood by him*, and he *was delivered from the mouth of the lion*, probably meaning Nero, whoſe ſavage diſpoſition was by this time ſufficiently manifeſt. It appears, however, that he had friends even in the houſehold of the emperor, and having liberty to ſee whom he pleaſed, he both preached the goſpel while at Rome, and wrote ſeveral of his epiſtles from thence; but one of the firſt things that he did was to ſend for the chief of the Jews who were then at Rome, and give an account of himſelf and his principles to them.

19. It might have been apprehended that, having been ill uſed by his countrymen, he would endeavour to do them ſome ill offices, which might have affected the Jews at Rome, as well as thoſe in Judea; and at this time the Jewiſh nation in general were conſidered with a jealous eye by the Romans, as ready to riſe in rebellion, which they actually did in a few years after this.

20. On account of his adherence to the true Meſſiah, and the doctrine of a reſurrection through him.

22. There is a greater degree of apparent candour in theſe Jews than in moſt of thoſe whom the apoſtle had met with. But it appears that ſo early as at this time there was a general prejudice againſt chriſtianity as ſomething dangerous, and proper to be diſcountenanced

nanced, without any diſtinct idea why it was ſo. This has always been the caſe with any *innovation* in religion, tho' ever ſo reaſonable, and for the better, thoſe who, from any cauſe, are diſinclined to it, finding it their intereſt to propagate and favour any report to it's prejudice. This grew to ſo great a height againſt chriſtianity in general, that we find it a common complaint of chriſtians, that they were condemned for the *name* only, without any hearing, or examination of their principles; ſo fully was our Saviour's warning verified, *ye ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake.* If nothing, elſe can be ſaid, it is enough with the generality that men's minds are diſturbed, and that ſome unknown change may be made. This was equally objected to the firſt chriſtians, to the reformers from popery, and to our anceſtors the Puritans. *They that turned the world upside down are come hither alſo.* This ſhould encourage all thoſe whoſe object it is to reſtore chriſtianity to its original purity. They are ſure, indeed, to meet with hatred and oppoſition, but let them behave under it as becomes chriſtians, and they will have no more reaſon to repent of their undertaking, than the apoſtles themſelves had in preaching chriſtianity firſt.

23. This ſeems to have been a long and intereſting conferrence; the apoſtle no doubt, labouring, as with other Jews, to convince them from the ſcriptures, that Jeſus was the Chriſt.

27. It is remarkable that this paſſage of Iſaiah is quoted many times in the New Teſtament, by our Saviour and his apoſtles, as applicable to the character of the

the Jews in general. It is ſtrongly expreſſive of the great force of prejudice, and there are many caſes where it is as much applicable to our own times as to theirs, there being perſons on whom the cleareſt exhibition of truth, with all its evidence, makes as little impreſſion.

31. It appears from Paul's epiſtles written from Rome, that many converts were made at this time, and ſome of them perſons of the higheſt rank. From this place he wrote his ſecond epiſtle to Timothy, thoſe to Philemon, to the Epheſians, to the Colloſſians, and to the Hebrews.

With the impriſonment at Rome, Luke the writer of this book, cloſes his hiſtory; but it ſeems probable that after Paul's releaſe from his confinement, which was A. D. 63, he went to Jeruſalem, and after viſiting Epheſus, Macedonia, and Greece, arrived again in Rome A. D. 64. In this year there was a dreadful fire at Rome, and Nero making a handle of it, began the firſt Roman perſecution of the chriſtians, as if they had been the incendiaries, tho' the heathen hiſtorians are far from conſidering them as having been concerned in it. Indeed they could not have had any intereſt in a thing of this nature; and in this perſecution it is probable that Paul, as well as Peter, who is ſaid to have been at Rome at the ſame time, were apprehended. Peter is ſaid to have been crucified, but Paul, being a Roman citizen, was beheaded. This was either in the latter end of the year 64, or the beginning of 65, one year before the breaking out of the Jewiſh war.

I cannot